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S E R M O N S

ON IMPORTANT

DOCTRINAL SUBJECTS,

WITH

CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY NOTES.

B7

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REV. HOSEA BALLOU

BOSTON:

JAMES M. USHER

37 CORNHILL.

1856.

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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THE discourses contained in this volume were delivered in the city of Philadelphia, during the two last weeks in December, 1821, and the first week in January, 1822. Rev. Hosea Ballou, their author, had been invited to that city by the Universalist society there; and during his short stay the number of his hearers increased so that, at the last service, it was supposed there were not far from seven thousand people.

The sermons were taken down by a stenographer at the time of delivery. The author had not the opportunity of revising and correcting the sheets before they went to press; otherwise some of his arguments might have been more full, and the language, in many cases, different. The stenographer, however, flattered himself that he had presented the discourses "*totidem verbis*;" but in this, doubtless, he was too sanguine.

The first edition of these sermons was published by Mr. Edwin T. Scott, in the year 1822. The style in which they were written was exceedingly bad. We have endeavored to improve them in this respect, although we have not bestowed upon them all that alteration which, under circumstances of more leisure, we should have been glad to have done.

In regard to the character of the sermons, we have a word to say. They are all on *important doctrinal* subjects. No Universalist can read them without feeling a deep and lively interest in the matter before him. They are distinguished by a patient reflection, originality of conception, closeness of reasoning, and pungency of application. The degrading and contradictory doctrines of the Orthodox creed are exposed, and utterly refuted. The love of God, as manifested in the great plan of salvation, which is calculated to produce in man a moral conformity to the divine nature, is set forth, particularly in the sermons entitled "God's Mindfulness of Man," "Characteristics of the Gospel," and "God's Uncaused Love to Men." We flatter ourselves, and we trust not without reason, that the circulation of this volume will confirm and strengthen the faith of Universalists, bring many to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and impart joy and consolation to all.

The Notes will, we have no doubt, be considered a useful supplement to the work. A part of them were appended to the first edition by a gentleman who superintended its publication; but they have been retrenched in some parts, and enlarged in others.

We are happy to close our remarks in this place by observing that, with unimpaired energies, he continues to discharge his duties as pastor of the Second Universalist Society in this city, besides other arduous labors; and that the present state of his health is such as to justify the hope that his usefulness will be continued yet for a long time.

## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

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WE need not here recapitulate the facts contained in the preface to the edition of 1832. The work has been for a long time out of print, and many inquiries have been made for it. The venerable author never produced poor sermons. There is a peculiar originality in all he wrote. He was no copyist; he followed no author, in the matter of his sermons, except the sacred writers. He preached much on the character and attributes of God; on God's care of men; on the perfection of God's law; on the power of Christian faith; on the character of Jesus, as the sent of God and the Saviour of the world; on his divine mission, devotion, knowledge, power and success; on the nature of pure religion; on the punishment of sin; on the scriptural doctrine of judgment; on life and immortality, &c. &c.;—and on all these subjects he spoke with a clearness and force of argument that carried conviction to the minds of all unprejudiced believers.

At the moment of putting this edition to the press, the long, laborious, useful, Christian life of the author of the sermons was closed. He died on the seventh of June, 1852, after an illness of only six days.

THOMAS WHITTEMORE.

JUNE 12, 1852.



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## S E R M O N I .

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WHAT IS MAN, THAT THOU ART MINDFUL OF HIM ? AND THE SON OF MAN, THAT THOU VISITEST HIM ? — Psalm 8 : 4.

It is established, by the question stated in the text, that God is mindful of man ; otherwise, there would be no propriety in the question, “ What is man, that thou art mindful of him ? ”

It is established, by the question in the text, that God is mindful of man on account of what man is ; otherwise, it would be improper to ask the question, “ What *is* man, that thou art mindful of him ? ”

It is established, by the text, that, on account of the mindfulness of God towards man, he visits him. Though the question in the text is varied, it is but one question : “ What is man, that thou art mindful of him ? and the son of man, that thou visitest him ? ”

The design of the present discourse is, to answer this question.

God is mindful of man on account of what man is.

In the first place, man is the creature of God. God is his Author, — his Maker ; to God we owe our existence, and it is an unreasonable supposition that a God of infinite wisdom would make anything without a design ; and, consistently with the design the Creator had in making the thing that he made, he must be mindful of it.

This idea may be communicated to your understanding in the simple simile of your own undertakings. You never make anything without some purpose ; and when you have made it, you regard it exactly in proportion as it answers the purpose for which you made it ; and you will see, upon a moment's reflection, that it is morally impossible that any intellectual being should make anything for no purpose. Hence, it is plain and evident that God made his creature for a purpose ; and in relation to all the dignity of that purpose he must regard the creature which he has so made.

Thus we have given you one answer to our question, " What is man, that thou art mindful of him ?



and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" He is the creature of God.

*Secondly.* Man is a moral, intellectual being, constituted with a capacity to improve in wisdom, in knowledge, and in understanding. It will not be difficult for the hearer to perceive that this statement is a proper answer to our question; because a being which possesses the qualities which man possesses, having an intellectual capacity, capable of learning and being instructed, must be designed for that purpose; for the Creator could have no reason why he should give man a capacity to learn, unless he designed him for improvement. Why does man possess a capacity for knowledge, why is he made susceptible of instruction, unless that in these capacities he is to be improved? When you learn the capacity of the thing made, and what end it is calculated to answer, you learn, at the same time, what it is designed for, and what it was intended for by its maker. It is evident from the history of mankind, as well as from our own observation, that man is possessed of these qualifications. He is capable of being instructed; he is capable of being taught; he is capable of being improved in

the exercise of his understanding ; he is capable, my friends, of being brought to a knowledge of that God who made him.

Hence, God is mindful of man as an intellectual, moral being. Having capacitated him for the reception of instruction, for a growth in wisdom, knowledge and understanding, it is reasonable that he should regard his creature as such, and improve him to the full extent of his powers. And that this is the law of intellectual nature, you will easily perceive by yourselves. As far as it comes within the compass of your power, you take delight and satisfaction in instructing those docile birds and animals which you find to be capable of any improvement. And you are not disposed to discontinue the means of such improvement, so long as they may be employed with success. You may not think, while thus employed, what this inclination philosophically proves ; but it is evidence to show that it is the nature of intellect to strive to improve intellectual powers.

The infinite Jehovah, as a Being of boundless wisdom and knowledge, must take peculiar delight and unbounded satisfaction in improving the intel-

lectual beings that he has made, in advancing them from one state of knowledge to another, from one degree of improvement to another; and, my friends, we learn from this another idea, valuable beyond estimation, namely, it is not reasonable that God will ever stop the improvement of his intellectual creature, so long as that being is capable of being improved. It is manifest, my hearers, that God will never cease to do this. He will never cease to love us; he will never cease to advance us in knowledge. The great theme of the gospel of Jesus is designed for this purpose. In an address to the Father, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of the gospel of St. John, Jesus says to his Father, "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

Hence the necessity of our being improved in knowledge; hence the propriety of the gospel dispensation for this purpose; hence the propriety of the idea, my friends, that the nature of our heavenly

Father is to advance his offspring man in the knowledge of himself.

A thought strikes your humble servant, which must not be passed over. There has been a doctrine long promulgated, that there is a time coming when God will not allow the ignorant an opportunity to learn; when he will not allow his creatures the means of education; when he will not allow his moral being an opportunity to advance in knowledge and wisdom. My friends, whether this idea is in the least accordant with the nature of God, with the nature of his goodness, with the nature of his wisdom, you can judge as well as I.

*Thirdly.* I have another answer to the question under consideration, — “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” I have an answer now to give you, perfectly sufficient, if I had named nothing else. The answers I have given you I believe you will not say are unreasonable or inapplicable. They are perfectly reasonable. Independent of them, however, there is another answer, one which is in perfect accordance with the others, and which, of itself, is entirely sufficient. What is that? It is that

which we predicate of a number of passages in Scripture, particularly the testimony of St. Paul when at Athens. Before the court of Athens, he gave a decisive answer to the question now under consideration ; he took advantage of the light and wisdom which God had given the Grecian poets, and said, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being : as certain also of your own poets have said, *for we are also his offspring.*"

My friends, is man the offspring of God ? Is man the child of God ? It is answer enough why God is mindful of man. For this I can appeal to your feelings, your senses, and your understanding. Where is the parent who is not mindful of his children ? And how perfectly natural it is that the parent should be mindful of his offspring ! There is that relation between the parent and child which constitutes the propriety of the mindfulness of the parent towards the child. This, my hearers, is perfectly in unison with the other answers I have given you, and adds largely to their importance. Man being considered an intellectual being, capable of mental improvement, the Almighty must take a delight in advancing his knowledge and wisdom as

far as it is capable of being advanced ; added to this, he is considered as the offspring and very child of God, which forms the answer to the question why God is mindful of us.

I will indulge the objector, for a moment, in his opinion. It will strike him that we ought not to style man the offspring of God in his natural state ; but he must become a regenerated being, he must be changed from his natural to a spiritual state, before he can be justly called the offspring of God. If so, how would St. Paul justify himself ? He was speaking before the court of Athens, and appealing to the testimony of the Grecian poets, and said, "For we are also his offspring." It is not supposable that the Grecian poets had any reference to the regenerated state of man, but to his natural state ; and St. Paul had no other meaning, in giving this answer ; because, if he had another meaning, he ought not to have used their language. The same answer to the question under consideration is given by Jeremiah : "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you." This is the language of a father. "Turn, O backsliding children." They are called "children" by God, who

commands them to turn to him. Here are two relations, the most important in all society, of which he predicates his argument and expostulation. He calls them, in the first place, "his children." How reasonable, therefore, is it that they should return! He then brings up the relation of marriage: "for I am married unto you." He does not say, "I *will* be married unto you," but claims absolutely this sacred relation as the foundation of a command that they should return.

My hearers, does not our blessed Saviour, the great Teacher sent from God, establish this doctrine likewise? Does he not direct us, when we pray, to call God "our Father, who art in heaven"? Whose duty is it to pray? It is the duty of all. Is it not a correct practice to teach this prayer to our little children? Would you teach them to pray to their Father who is in heaven, if they have no Father there? Would you teach them to address God as their Father, and then systematically teach them that God is not their Father? He is the Father of all the moral creation. He is the Father of every individual of the human family. He is declared to be the Father of our spirits. If so,

then we are his offspring, emphatically ; and, being the offspring of God, he is mindful of us, and he has visited us.

Having answered the question stated in the text, I shall pursue the subject by noticing the visits God has made the children of men.

Keep the idea constantly in your minds, that whatever notice God has taken of man, whatever visits he has made us, are on account of what man is, on account of his care of man, on account of his love to his offspring. Contemplate, then, for a moment, the innumerable blessings of the providence of God ! Reflect, my friendly hearers, on the favors you have received at his hand, as you have passed through the several stages of life ! Contemplate the fatherly kindness he showed towards you before you knew that there was such a Being ! Contemplate the tender providence of the Almighty when you knew not that time passed away, — when you knew not your own dependence, — when you knew not what was necessary for your own life ! In that condition, — in that tender, feeble condition, — how were you surrounded by the tender mercies



of God! and know, this was all on account of the mindfulness of God towards you.

As you advanced in days and years, you advanced in wisdom and knowledge, until you came to know the Supreme Creator and Ruler of all things. The sentiment which teaches that it is necessary for man to know God, in order that God may be good to him, is not correct. If it were correct, then the parent should not take care of the child until the child has a knowledge of the parent. If this doctrine were reduced to practice, no child would ever come to the knowledge of its parent. It is a long time that the child is nurtured by the parent before it comes to the knowledge of that parent; and innumerable blessings do we receive from God before we know there is a God, much less know his moral qualities. But, all the time, he is taking care of us, providing for our welfare, and acting upon the principles which are requisite to our well-being.

We may now take into consideration the visit which God has made man in the gospel of his dear Son, and contemplate this precious gift of God to the world. Hear the language. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son; that

whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

Thus, you see, the gift of Jesus was on account of God's love to the world, — a love which existed before this gift was bestowed. This was not a gift made to induce our Father to love us. Such a conclusion would be a very strange perversion. A father does not make a present to a child to make him love the child, but because he does love the child. The love is antecedent, and the gift is designed to favor the object of affection, and to let this object of affection know the love which exists in the parent's bosom.

This is the great theme of the gospel of Jesus; and the gospel indeed goes further, and says, "God commendeth his love towards us, *in that while we were enemies* Christ died for us." Thus every gospel promise, every gospel privilege, every gospel favor, is the production of the mindfulness of God concerning his offspring. All that our Saviour did was a visit of God to us. It was the visit of our heavenly Father; it was the visit of our heavenly

Father's mercy to his offspring here below. Every dispensation of grace which is manifested to his children is a manifestation of God's mindfulness of his offspring; and, my hearers, the grand result of the gospel dispensation shows what God has designed for his children; and what he has designed for his children is just what a parent, in the winding up of his earthly affairs, designs for his offspring. He gives him an estate; he puts his property into his hands, — so testifies the Spirit. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and, if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.” Thus “God hath given us eternal life; and this life is in his Son.” Why did God give us eternal life? Because he is himself eternal life, and a father can never give less than himself. God has given us himself. All that he is he has given to the children of men. We are the heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

In the result of our reasoning we have this pleasing reflection, this sublime, this instructive lesson, namely, *the wisdom which constituted the vast frame of the universe, and organized all nature, — the power that raised this glorious*

*superstructure upon its basis, — has ever been directed, and ever will be directed, towards the good and benefit of mankind.* And that there can be no such thing as partiality, or anything like cruelty, in all the system of God, as the moral governor of the world, is as plain a proposition as can possibly be stated. There is not, in the bosom of the rational father, any principle but goodness to his children. There is not, in the bosom of our heavenly Father, nor can there be, anything like cruelty or partiality; but his eternal wisdom is ever working for the benefit of his creatures. Thus is the question answered, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

Consider, then, my hearers, that we are all the work of God's hand; we are intellectual beings, capable of being improved; we are the offspring of God. He visits us on account of what we are; and, from this doctrine, the result is natural. We feel our dependence, and, to the utmost of our moral abilities, we ought, therefore, to endeavor to improve ourselves, as far as it is possible; remembering that it is as much our duty to honor God as it is the duty of the child to honor the parent. It is the

duty of man to honor his parent God, and to obey his commandments, and that from the purest principle of love; and to walk in obedience to his will, that we may act like rational creatures. Keep this sentiment always in your minds; let it ever direct your hearts. Love God constantly, and abundant will be your peace, abundant your joy, abundant your satisfaction and delight. And, instead of tending, as our opposers sometimes assert, to licentiousness, to a corruption of morals, and an indulgence of unbridled passions, it will always tend to lead us to conduct ourselves with the utmost propriety in relation to our heavenly Father, in relation to all mankind as brethren, and in relation to ourselves. As it is of the highest importance that the child should know the dignity and character of his parent, in order that he may act according to that dignity, so it is important that we should know God, in order that we may not degrade ourselves by a low estimation of our moral nature, but contemplate that God has made us rational beings.

O, what a delightful thought it is, when your humble servant, travelling as he now is, beholds the face of an audience he never before saw, to look

on them, and reflect that they are all the children of one Father, all the children of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ! Most delightful, most moralizing, most humanizing thought! And how perfectly calculated to make us, one and all, improve in the understanding of divine things, to the honor of our Father, God, and to the comfort of ourselves!

## SERMON II.

---

FOR WE WHICH HAVE BELIEVED DO ENTER INTO REST. —  
Hebrews 4 : 3.

IF we take the word *rest* in its proper latitude, it will comprehend all the comforts and consolations of the gospel of Christ. And, with this exposition of that word, we shall say that our text proves that the Christian faith embraces nothing but what is consistent with man's happiness. This you will perceive, on the reading of the text : "For we which have *believed* do enter into *rest*." Thus faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ introduces the believer to the enjoyment of rest, peace, delight, and consolation. If this, then, be the fact, you will perceive my first proposition is proved most clearly by the text, namely, *the gospel faith embraces nothing inconsistent with the happiness of the believer.*

*Secondly.* Our text suggests this important fact, that the blessings of faith are the consequences of

believing, and are enjoyed in the same time in which the believer is exercising faith in the gospel. Observe the tense, my hearers, in which the verb is found: "We which have believed do enter rest;" that is, in the present time. This is in support of the fact suggested before, that the blessings which we receive in consequence of believing the truth are received and enjoyed in the present time, while we are believers.

The first position may now pass under examination. *The Christian faith embraces nothing that is inconsistent with the happiness, the rest, and the enjoyment, of the believer.* The Christian believes in God. He is a believer in God, his Maker; but he does not believe that God possesses any attribute which is hostile to his happiness. If this thought should enter his heart, — if he should believe that God possesses an attribute that is hostile to the best good and happiness of his creatures, — could he enjoy *rest, comfort or consolation*, in that belief? No. My friends, when you combine the attributes of Jehovah, and contemplate that he is a being unlimited in knowledge, and unquestionably possessed of supreme power over his creatures, and then believe



that he possesses any disposition inimical to the happiness and peace of the works of his hand, every feeling soul is harrowed up to all the exercise of horror; and if there be a desire in the heart, it is to be delivered from such a God. But the whole character of the Divine Being is elucidated to the understanding through the glorious mediation of Jesus Christ, "who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." To God we can look and say, "There is my father, my unchangeable friend, the origin of my being, who is all love, all mercy, all compassion." If any perturbation possessed the soul, if any fearful apprehension was entertained, it is now vanished and gone; "for he that believeth entereth into rest."

Can we indulge (without being thought invidious) in some observations with regard to certain errors that have been introduced into the Christian church? It shall be by way of querying whether such sentiments can be believed, and, when believed, have the effect of introducing the believer to the enjoyment of rest. My friends, it has been taught in the Christian church that the Creator, from all

eternity, proposed, in his irrevocable decrees, that but part of the human family should be everlastingly blest in the enjoyment of peace; and, in consequence, it has been believed that millions of rational men were decreed, from unborn ages of eternity, to suffer inconceivable, indescribable misery, as long as the throne of God shall exist! I will by no means wound the feelings of my hearers by exposing such a sentiment with regard to its parts and ligaments; but I would humbly call on you to decide this question, which is, by no means, a difficult one, — If you believe such a sentiment as this, *does it give you rest?* Does it introduce peace and enjoyment to the soul? My friends, I will allow you to believe that you are among the elected, — and you will find that every one who believes in this sentiment believes that he is elected, — allow this to be your condition, yet does it give you rest? “Why not?” says the hearer. “If I believe that I am elected, why should I not have peace and rest?” O! dear man! dear woman! have you no connections in the world? Are you insulated from human nature? Do you thus stand alone? I ask you to look at the companion of your bosom,

look on the child of your love, and say if you can believe in this doctrine, and believe it probable that these connections were originally doomed by the decree of Heaven to everlasting wretchedness, and derive consolation from that belief? My friends, we will do what it is perfectly right to do in this case, and what the circumstances of the case compel us to do. We will appeal to the consciences of those who not only believe this creed, but propagate it in the world. Ask them if their faith gives them rest? They do not pretend it. The more they rely on that faith, they say themselves, the more *anxious* they are, and the more concerned they are, for the welfare of their immortal souls. Very well; this is an honest confession, and exactly what we should expect from a good man. Do you see them in agony? Yes. Do you sometimes see them in tears? Yes. Do you sometimes see them looking gloomy? Yes. Do you hear them groan with grief? Yes. They believe; yes, they are real believers. Of what? Why, of that which administers to them this torment. They believe what no man can believe will be realized, without being tormented. Do they not tell us, from the

pulpit, how anxious they feel by day, and how tormented they are by night? This is the true testimony; and we read in the Scriptures that "they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image." Whoever worships a Deity or a God that is not as they wish him to be never can have any comfort or consolation in worshipping him. The last-recited passage of Scripture actually belongs to this subject. It is only necessary to remark that the reading of the text justifies this entirely. "They HAVE no rest," in the present tense.

"They have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image." What worship is that? Worship of a deity full of wrath, full of vengeance, full of displeasure against his creatures. These are the characteristics of a beast of prey. And when a deity is possessed of these qualities, and man falls down before him, it is on account of the agonies of soul and torments of mind that he endures. Some, indeed, are honest enough to tell you that, if they did not believe God were such a being, they would not worship him at all; and they wonder men do worship him who do not believe him to possess such a character. You will see, therefore, my friends,

the necessity of possessing a faith embracing properties consoling to the human heart.

Examine, however, a different creed. We will say, as some do, "Our God is not the partial being he is represented to be, who, from all eternity, made a division of human creatures, designing to bless some and curse others. But he is a being who, from a benevolent principle of generous love for his creatures, has made them all capable of inheriting eternal salvation, but has rested it on the condition of their obedience." My brethren, allow, if you please, that this is true. Does this give you rest, to believe that your eternal state depends upon your own works,—on the correctness of your views, on the orthodoxy of your own sentiments and opinions, on the conformity of your conduct to the requirements and commandments of God, while you pass through a temporal existence? And when you contemplate your own imperfections, and when you look over the many indications of defect which you discover in your thoughts and actions, can you then derive comfort and consolation in saying, "I shall soon be before my Maker; my God will search my heart; he will judge me and reward me according

to my works ; and I am perfectly at rest, perfectly at peace, in the belief that if I have as much happiness in the eternal world as I merit by good works in this, I shall be as happy as I wish !”

Is there such a believer in this congregation ? Not one. Not one. Christians of this description are laboring under fearful apprehensions. Their work is not done. What are they at work for ? To secure an eternal state of felicity in another world. How much must they do ? This is doubtful. Have they made any progress ? This again is doubly doubtful. What a large discount must there be made from the comforts and consolations of such believers ! If we go to them, and ask the question we asked in the former case, we shall receive a similar answer. Their behavior never can indicate that they have peace. It never can indicate that they enjoy repose. They are perpetually harassed, and exercised with tormenting fears, that, in the balance weighed at last, they shall be found wanting.

It is their firm belief that millions of their fellow-creatures will be found wanting on the day of judgment, of which they speak, and will be entirely banished from all favor, and from all love and kind-

ness of God. My dear friends, let me ask you, can you believe in any doctrine which results eventually in the division of human nature, by which one part of our fellow-creatures are sent to never-ceasing misery, without feeling in your own hearts those fearful apprehensions which sometimes lead you to look on yourselves as exposed to never-ending woe? Can you, then, look upon the companion of your bosom, without being exercised with awful apprehensions and painful reflections for the object of your affections? Can you look on your children, without being harassed by painful agony on their account? Can you look on the world at large, and believe with those who have computed that so many millions go down to regions of everlasting despair and torment every year, and be at rest?

This sentiment is by no means calculated to give peace. It is by no means calculated to administer comfort or repose to your minds. But, if we believe what our blessed Saviour taught, as the pure doctrine of God, his Father, we shall necessarily rest satisfied that we are the children of God. We shall believe God is our Father, the unchangeable friend and Father of every being he has created. There

was never anything necessary to be done by mankind, in order to induce God to be merciful. There was never anything necessary to be done by God, to make God love us. There was never anything necessary to be done by us, to make God our friend, and to make God love us. You will not say the speaker excludes the necessity of good works; but he predicates them of the noble principle of love. Truth is always simple. There is no contradiction in it. There is nothing in it difficult to be understood. If you understand the principle in one case, you can always understand it. Now, all I have said on this part of the subject is summed up in this: It is not necessary for you to do anything for your child to induce you to love it. It is not necessary for the child to do anything to constitute you a lover of it. All you do for your child is done because you love it; and all the duty it owes you is by reason of the love you bear it, and the favors it received from you. This is plain doctrine, and not disputable; and hence it is perfectly easy to perceive that God, the author of all our blessings, never required anything of us to render him kind, but our obedience rests on the principle of his goodness to us. God



denies us nothing which is for our good ; God requires nothing but for our benefit. He has no interest to serve but our happiness, and hence he is engaged in no other cause than that in which a parent is engaged, who is endeavoring to render his family as comfortable and as blest as possible. This is the true character of God, as represented to us by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Read the Scripture : “ Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound : that, as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. 5 : 20, 21.

Sin was never the occasion of any enmity in God towards mankind. This is easily perceived. “ God manifested his love to us in that *while we were yet sinners* Christ died for us.” Rom. 5 : 8. Now, God could not manifest love that he did not possess. He must have loved us while we were yet sinners, or he would not have sent us such a blessing as is Christ. Again, Christ says, “ God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,” &c. And so love is the author of every other gift. The

idea, then, that God entertains wrath towards mankind, is erroneous, and always has been erroneous. "But" says the objector, "according to this doctrine, it certainly matters not what we do; for, if God is to be our friend while we transgress his law, as well as our friend while we obey his law, then it is no matter whether we obey or transgress." This is a mistake most injurious to community. Must we believe that, because God has no enmity towards us, it is no matter whether we obey him or not? This is most injurious to society; and I will apply this doctrine to your family government. When a child disobeys you, must you persuade that child that, on account of its disobedience, you are its enemy, or say to the child it is no matter what it does? You know you love the child, though it disobeys you; but is it no matter what the child does? This is not the fact. It is necessary the child should obey the parent. For what? Because your requirement of obedience embraces the happiness of the child, and the child cannot be happy in disobedience. Man can never be blest without obedience; but he is blest in obedience, and in obedience alone.

The love the father of the prodigal had towards the prodigal was the same. It was the same when the prodigal returned as it was before he went away. But would you say, if that father still loved the child, it was no matter what the child did? that it was no matter what disobedience it was guilty of? This is a wrong sentiment, and tends to the injury of society. "Know ye not that it is the goodness of God that leadeth you to repentance?" Rom. 2: 4. Is it not gratitude to God that forms the basis of religion and devotion? Shall we teach man to worship him from slavish fear? Shall we not rather say, as St. Paul does in his argument to the Romans, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, *by the mercies of God*, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"? Rom. 12: 1.

He besought them by the *mercy*, not by the tyranny, wrath and vindictive justice, of God. He besought them by the mercies of our heavenly Father, in all the simplicity of a friend going into your house, and saying, "Children, I beseech you, by the tenderness, by the kindness, and by the compassion of your parents, to obey them, and devote

yourself entirely to their wisdom, experience, and knowledge."

It is desirable to look into the Scriptures to see what they require us to believe. When men write creeds, they write many articles; but Jesus Christ says, "Believe in God; believe also in me." That seems to be the whole faith. What is this belief? To believe in God as the all-wise author of our being, and in Jesus Christ as our deliverer from sin and death. Believe in this, and believe in the whole extent of it, and believe God is destitute of partiality, and of any power to make this division among the human family, as he is represented as the father of all, and you will enter into rest. The moment you believe this doctrine, you have peace. You will not serve him because you are afraid of torment, but because you love him, because you have peace and enjoyment in obeying the commandments and requirements of God. It is a false notion that it is no matter what we do, if God loves us; because all that God has done for man stands up as evidence of God, as evidence of his goodness and immutable nature, and stands as an inducement to us to honor and glorify our Maker. Let

us observe, the blessings of faith must be enjoyed while faith lasts. The Christian church expects to receive blessings in the future world, as a reward and compensation for its faith in this. Here is a strange notion. My friends, you must enjoy the blessings of your faith while you have your faith; and you must suffer the consequence of your unbelief while your unbelief lasts.

As I have just time to represent this in a simile simple and natural, I will suppose that some poor creature, in the circle of the society in which you move, should believe that the sun will never rise again, nor glorify the day, nor any longer give light to the world, and this gloomy soul should persuade many others to think the same. The rest of society believe that the sun will rise as he did this morning, and pass on as he has always done. Now, how long are you to be blessed in consequence of believing the promises of God, that day and night shall continue? When do you receive that blessing? During the light? No, not after the sun rises, because then it has come. On the other hand, when are those tormented who are in unbelief? It is impossible they can be tormented with unbe-

lief when they see the sun rise. The inconvenience of unbelief must be only during the night; for, the moment the evidence of a glorious morning appears, and the sun begins to shine, their gloom and unbelief are dissipated together, and they break out in joy and acclamations of satisfaction. The words of St. Paul are applicable to this subject: "What if some did not believe? shall the unbelief of man make the faith of God of no effect? God forbid." God is just as good, my brethren, when men are unbelievers, as when they are believers; but by believing we enter into enjoyment. We believe the testimony of the gospel, through which our blessed Saviour has brought life and immortality to light, — not created it, but brought it to light, — he has manifested it, and we believe in this state of life and immortality. We do not expect immortality because we believe, but *peace of soul*. And, my dear friends, if you believe in the unchangeable, impartial kindness of God towards the human family, and in the resurrection of his Son, our Saviour, from the dead, and that he is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, — while you believe in this, you will

enter into rest, and enjoy peace and comfort, by that belief.

And now, may God Almighty grant that we may duly appreciate the blessings bestowed upon us, *enter into rest*, and enjoy all the sweets, comforts, and consolations, of the gospel of peace !

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## SERMON III.

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**BUT WHOSO LOOKETH INTO THE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY, AND CONTINUETH THEREIN, HE BEING NOT A FORGETFUL HEARER, BUT A DOER OF THE WORK, THIS MAN SHALL BE BLESSED IN HIS DEED. — James 1 : 25.**

A DESCRIPTION of the perfect law of liberty is the first subject to which the attention of the hearer is invited. Though it has pleased our heavenly Father to reveal himself in a vast variety of forms or methods, yet in all his dispensations he is the same being, and is possessed of the same character ; and though at different periods he may have instituted different rites and ceremonies, as the means whereby the people should exercise themselves in holiness, and in the spirit of divine worship, he was always the same, and must ever remain the same ; and though different names are given to different dispensations recorded in the Scriptures, yet the law



of the All-wise Creator never has varied, and never can vary. God, being the Father of all rational, intelligent beings, has but one unchangeable law by which to govern them, and that law is the law mentioned in the text. We hear of the law given to the house of Israel by the mediator of the first covenant, and we read of the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. My brethren and friends, these are the same laws ; for the law of Moses is all summed up and explained in these words, by the blessed Redeemer, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, with all thy mind, with all thy strength, and with all thy might. This is the first and great commandment of the law, and the second is like unto it ; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Permit me here to observe that this law is the same as the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which makes us free from the law of sin and death. The law of sin is death ; but the law of life in Christ Jesus is the law of love, and no other law can make the transgressor free from sin. Whatever other methods are proposed, whatever sug-

gestions have been made by the wisdom of the world respecting means and methods whereby the sinner is justified, Heaven devised but one way, and that is by conformity to the law of God. Whoever loves the Lord his God, and his neighbor as himself, fulfils the law, and in that he is justified; and it is altogether impossible that any other kind of justification should do the creature the least good. This law of the Spirit of life in Christ is the law of love to God, and love to man; and the apostle says that all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In further describing this law, we shall take notice of its *perfection*. It is called, as in our text, "the perfect law of liberty." It then must be a perfect law of liberty. A law is perfect, if it needs no amendment or alteration to answer the purpose for which it was made. In human legislation it is frequently the case that it is necessary to make alterations and amendments in a law to answer the purposes and ends of that law; but in divine legislation there is no occasion for this, because our heavenly Father could make no mistake. Almighty God, in framing a law, knew what would answer the

purpose, and therefore his law was complete and perfect in the beginning. Now, no other law would answer the purpose, but the law of love; for love towards God secures the creature's obedience, in all its forms; because, whoever loves another always endeavors to conform to what is agreeable to the person he loves. And if we love our neighbors as ourselves, it is impossible that we can trespass on their rights, privileges or immunities, in any shape, or ever fall short of doing everything to them, and for them, that they can need from us, as far as we are able. You see, then, the perfection of the law. It never can be altered, it never can be changed; it was perfect in the beginning, it is perfect now, it will always remain a perfect law. There never will be any need of repealing it; it will be always binding, always obligatory, on every being in the universe; and you will hear the cry, through all heaven and through all nature, "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, — love thy neighbor as thyself." This is pure, unsullied divinity, from God the Creator of all. My friends, it never can possibly be otherwise than the duty of every mortal being to love his Creator and his fellow-beings.

The perfection of this law appears in its being perfectly calculated to answer the end and purpose of that law, which is the ultimate happiness and felicity of the subject. It is not necessary for me to inform my hearers that the very end and design is the happiness of a subject. Any law that does not produce the happiness of the subject in the result is a law that does not answer its designs. And here permit me to observe that it is proof positive that our heavenly Father designed the happiness of every rational creature, in that he subjected all to his requirement, "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." Permit me to observe that it is impossible for any individual to perform the duties here required without being blessed to all the extent of blessing that he can enjoy. Our heavenly Father continually blesses his creatures on earth; and those creatures have nothing better to bestow in return than love towards God and their fellow-men. Here permit me also to say that the perfection of the law appears in another peculiar instance, namely, that it has no substitute. There is no substitute for obedience. Heaven never accepts of anything in room of this obedience. You

cannot put it off, and settle your account with the law in any other way than by conforming to it. This is the nature of the law of love; and it may, if you please, be simplified by what is perfectly within the capacity of common understanding. If the parent love the child, there is nothing to be expected in return but love from the child to the parent. He might bring all the offerings and sacrifices in his ability to bestow, and spread them at his father's feet, and say, "Accept of these in room of my love and affection;" and though the offering contained all the mines of the south, and all the riches of the Indies, it would be worth nothing in comparison with love. The father would say, "No, child; I love you in my heart; the only return I can accept is that you love me." In the law of God the result is just the same. The principle is immutable. It has been proposed by erring man — (remember "to err is human," and we do not disparage his character when we say this), — it has been proposed by erring man, I say, that, finally, God will accept of something in room of man's love; that something else will answer the same purpose. Now, what has been proposed as this substitute? I am sorry I cannot

show you a better than that I am about to mention. It is the worst that ever could have been thought of; but it has been thought of, and proposed to the people. It is to employ God himself—observe, to employ *God himself*—in the eternal work of tormenting his creatures, in room of accepting their love to him. My friends, what sort of return is this? Let us look at it. Let us understand the nature of it. Why does God require us to love him? The reason given at once is, “because he loves us.” 1 John 4: 10, 19. If we are enemies to any person, we do not wish that person to love us. But, if we love any person, we wish him to love us. Is not this natural? If you love your child, in the room of that child’s loving you, would you be satisfied to torment that child as far as lay in your power? This is downright absurdity. Nothing can be more absurd. It is granted, on all hands, that the Creator loves us, or he never would have required us to love him. If he loves us, he has no substitute for our love to him. Our disobedience, certainly, will not answer in room of love. Our being tormented is far from answering the purpose. “Why,” says the hearer, “is not the law a penal law? Does it

not require the everlasting torment of those who disobey it?" As plainly as the question is stated, so plainly we answer in the negative. My friends, it is direct absurdity and contradiction to say that the law of love requires the disobedient to be everlastingly tormented. What God requires of the disobedient is obedience, and that is all. "But does it not inflict punishment?" says the hearer. "Does not this law subject the transgressor to punishment?" Yes, it does. The proposition is essential to the doctrine; but, bear in mind this one thing: that a God of infinite wisdom never would, and never could, consistently with this law, introduce a penalty calculated to effectuate disobedience in the end; for that would be to transgress his own law. The law is the law of love; and that which would keep the creature from love would be an abolition of the law. This proves, to all intents and purposes, that if the law have a penalty inconsistent with itself, it would be an abolition of itself. To be plain about it: imagine, for a moment, that one single wretched individual, falling under the penalty of the law, is sent into a state of endless sin, to suffer to all eternity. I ask you, Does such a law operate like love? No. What

is it, then? It is enmity; it is wrath; it is unkindness. "Be not overcome of evil," says the scripture, "but overcome evil with good." Rom. 12: 21. Is this overcoming evil with good, making a creature suffer endless misery? No. It is establishing the creature in endless sin, because he did not for a few moments love God. It is passing a decree that he shall *never* love God! Can you affirm anything more contrary to the law of love? No. But the law of love is perfect, as it administers its punishment to bring transgressors to obedience. That is the perfection of the law of God. You will find this to be the fact, by your observation and experience in society. For, if you deviate from this law of love, you will find disobedience and trouble so inseparably connected, that any deviation from the love of God, and from the love of mankind, operates to your disadvantage. What is this more than to tell us, the moment we disobey, "Child, you have done wrong; you have gone astray from your felicity. There is but one way for you to regain that felicity, and that is to return to your duty. Love your God, and love your neighbor as yourself." You will find, also, that God never suffers one act of obedience to go



unrewarded. He always compensates obedience. It is sometimes the case in civil society, owing to the constitution of human nature, that we do not enjoy the reward of good works immediately; but in moral government there is no possibility of such a mistake, because the soul that loves God enjoys the happy compensation in his own bosom. For there is no possibility of a man's loving God and his neighbor without enjoying happiness. Thus he is blessed. In this you will see the perfection of the law. It never suffers any deviation from it to pass with impunity; but it administers all the chastisement which the nature of the case requires, in every degree in which it is disobeyed.

Having taken notice of the *perfection* of the law, we will now consider the other quality of it.

Our text says, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of *liberty*." You see, my friends, it is not only a "perfect" law, but a law of "*liberty*." Why is it "a law of liberty"? If you will not draw conclusions too hastily, but hear a few words on the subject, I will tell you. It is called the perfect law of liberty *because it gives every person liberty to do just as he has a mind to do*. I told you not to

draw conclusions too hastily. I put the sentiment in these terms to assist your memory. It is the law of *liberty*; for the subject enjoys the privilege of doing just as he pleases. But, "How is this?" says the hearer. "Suppose I transgress the commandment, and suppose I will wrong my neighbor. I can put something into my coffers by taking it away from my fellow-creatures. I have a right to do this! I think I have liberty." Is this the law? Look at the law. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Now, in order to know whether you have a right to do just as you please, in the first place begin by loving God and your neighbor, and *then* do what you please.

If you love God, it will be your pleasure to serve him; and if you love your fellow-creature, it will wound you to harm him. This may be brought to the test of your feelings. In the circle where you find the companion of your bosom and your lovely children around you, you can do just as you please. The law there is "a law of perfect liberty;" because you would please do nothing but good. Just so,

every lover of God, and every lover of mankind, who has uncontrolled liberty to do just as he pleases, never chooses to do anything dishonorable to his Maker, or injurious to his fellow-creatures; but he will do everything to contribute to the benefit and good of mankind. What more liberty do you want? What is required of thee, O man, but "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God"? Let us observe that the man who looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, "not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, is blessed therein," blessed in his deed.

In order to form a perfect idea on this subject, I propose to advert to what is generally preached in the Christian church. You are exhorted sometimes to be religious, and you are told that you will be rewarded in the next world. Though it be ever so hard, ever so irksome, to be virtuous, and though it be ever so disagreeable to lead a religious and holy life, it is better to do this than to live in ease, and plenty, and joy, and happiness, regaling ourselves with the luxuries of this life, and miss heaven at last. My hearers, this is an awful mistake. How it sinks the dignity, beauty and glory, of religion!

Religion is "the bread of life" and "the water of life." Shall I tell you it is better to enjoy the frost of winter than the glory and comfort of the summer sun? What sort of reasoning would it be, if I were to tell you that, for the sake of a reward in eternity, it is better for you to eat food ever so disagreeable, than to live in all the enjoyments of plenty? There is the water, the pure water of life. Must you receive it when it is disagreeable, because you will be rewarded hereafter? Whoever thought of a reward for eating food beyond the benefit of the thing itself? These emblems of Jesus Christ and his religion show that religion itself is peace. You will perceive, by the text, that "the hearer who looks at the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, shall be blessed *in his deed*." What is the deed? To love God, his Creator. And who, in all the world, in all the universe, would not be blessed *in his deed*, if he loved God? If you love your neighbor, are you not blessed? If you do not love God, are you not troubled? if you hate your neighbor, are you not tormented? And here is the perfect law of liberty, into which, if you look and continue therein, "not being forgetful hearers, but

doers of the work, you shall be blessed *in your deed.*" Blessing a hearer *for* doing his moral duty, as a compensation, besides the blessings he derives from acting right, is a subject which requires some animadversion. I will ask, what compensation can you expect? What compensation besides is possible? What other compensation can you receive, in the nature of things? If we love God and our fellow-creatures, does not that compensate itself, and is not that a sufficient reward for the labor of our love? What can we expect in addition? What would you have? Something besides your love to God, and your love to man! What is it? Only a moment's reflection shows you that there cannot be any other recompense. What can be inflicted on the transgressor, in addition to the inconvenience resulting from his transgression? What extra punishment can you lay upon him? A moment's reflection will show you that there is not anything else in the universe. Sufficient unto man is the punishment of sin. You can add nothing to it.

Now, permit me to ask you what compensation you ever thought of, for taking care of your own duties, for loving your family, for taking care of

your children? "O!" says the hearer, "I never thought of any, other than the blessing of loving my family, and doing for them all that they needed." What is there that could compensate more than this enjoyment? Nothing in the universe. There is no possibility of any other compensation, and no other exists in nature. No other is wanted. Will you say, "If I did not expect an eternity of blessing in another world, I would not love the companion of my bosom, I would not love my children, I would not love my fellow-creatures; but I would do all the harm to my dearest friends that was possible"? Can moral delirium extend to this? I know not whether you have ever heard of anything similar to what I am about to mention; but, in my acquaintance with society, it has frequently been said to me (I will state no more than the truth, but I will do it impartially), by those who profess to be teachers of the Christian religion, that if they believed God would save all mankind, and render them everlastingly blessed, they would never obey any of the requirements of religion; they would not read their Bible, they would never go to meeting, nor to any place of worship. I do not mention this to cast any

reflections on sects or denominations. That is out of the question. I state it as the nature of the case, the nature of the principle. I will now interrogate these professors in this way: I will ask them first what is religion. They will agree that it is to love God and mankind. Love your God, and love your neighbor as yourself. Then, put all this together, and see the absurdity of their profession! Here the professor comes forward, and claims to be religious; that is, he professes to love God and to love his neighbor. Yes, and, under these circumstances, he tells God, "If I knew that thou wouldst do as well by my neighbor as by me, I never would have loved thee or my neighbor."

Many of you are parents. Suppose your children come to you and say, "You ask us to love you. Well, we have done so. What reward will you give us for our love?" "Why, children," say you, "if you love your parents, you have happiness." "Yes, we know that; but it is hard to love those who do not conduct themselves properly. What are we to have more than our brothers and sisters?" "Why," says the parent, "I love you all alike. I intend to do by you all alike." "Well," say these

children, "if we had known that you were going to do by our brothers and sisters, who did not love you, as well as you do by us, we never would have loved you, — we never would have loved them." Here comes out the hypocrisy! Here comes out the deceit! Must we pretend to love God, and love our neighbor, and then say we never would do so, if we thought God would do as well by them as he does by us? How long, my hearers, is man to be blind? How long is he to be withheld from the perfect law of liberty? How long is he to be withheld from continuing in it, and enjoying it? What blessings every heart would enjoy, if it exercised love to God and man! And how joyful would be the thought that the Author of our being will be the same to our fellow-creatures as to us! This is all I want, this is all I pray for, all I expect. Do we not see that when one child who loves its parent comes with a request to that parent, it requests also for others, as well as itself? But what would you think of the child who would say, "Father, I want some food; but I cannot enjoy it, if you let others have food also, so well as I should if you would let them starve in my sight; I should then relish it to



an extent that I never can enjoy if you let them have food also"? "Why," says the hearer, "such a child ought to know the want of food, in order that he might pity those who were in the same situation." My friendly hearers, is it not dishonorable to God, and degrading to man, to hold up such doctrines, and call them by the name of divinity? and, to crown the whole absurdity, call them this *perfect law of liberty*? Does this exhibit the character and preaching and labors of our Lord Jesus Christ? No. The perfect law of liberty is the law of the spirit of love, which is in our Lord Jesus Christ. He loved his Father with all his heart; he loved mankind as he loved himself; and gave himself for us, that he might sanctify us by the washing of the Word. He was blessed in his deed; and he says, "My meat and my drink is to do the will of him that sent me." And, if we are disciples of Jesus, it will be our meat and drink to do so likewise. We are not to love God to make him love us; we are not to love our fellow-creatures to make God love us; but it is our natural duty to love God because he first loved us, and our fellow-creatures because God loves them. This is so plain and man-

ifest, that it is strange society has lived so long in darkness and ignorance.

We are told sometimes that this doctrine leads to licentiousness. How is that possible? How can we love God and man, and be licentious? "But," says the hearer, "God is good to all, and will make all forever happy; does not this furnish reason for indulgence in sin?" Our blessed Saviour pointed out the universal benevolence of God in the sun and rain. "It hath been said unto you, by them of old time, thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who causes his *sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*"

Moses says, "My doctrine shall drop like *the rain*, my speech shall distil as *the dew*; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." These, my friends, are gospel emblems. Does this sun, does this rain, does this dew, preach a licentious doctrine? Do they not preach loving kindness to all the earth? Hear the gospel of God,

as preached by himself: "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee; and in thee, and in thy seed, shall ALL nations be blessed." God blesses all. He sends us the heat of the sun; he sends us genial rain; and, as far as the dews fall, so far shall the gospel result in blessing the human family. And let each of us say, "If God loves me, I will imitate my Father in heaven; and if the gospel embraces us all, let me do the same, and embrace my fellow-creatures in the affection of the soul; and let me live in this religion, walk in this perfect law of liberty, and be blessed in my deeds."

## SERMON IV.

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UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN, UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN. —  
Isaiah 9: 6.

I WILL attempt, in the first place, to illustrate what is meant by this expression.

“Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.” It is a child that is born; it is a son that is given. We first state the position, and then illustrate it. The meaning of the text is, that this child, this son, was born or given to the world of mankind for their benefit. All gifts are supposed to be for the benefit of those to whom they are made.

The Messiah, who is the subject of this scripture, was born for the benefit of the world, was given for the benefit of mankind; and thus justifies the form of expression, “unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:” that is, for our benefit.

The illustration will be taken, in the first place, from some circumstances that have come within

your own observation, in the circle of your acquaintance in society. You have, perhaps, known a family that has seen good days, and enjoyed affluence, by some misfortune become reduced to poverty and want, and not able to retrieve their former condition. It so happens, by the kind providence of God, that a little child, an infant, is born, who, when he is first given to the family, seems to be, as it were, an addition to their care and expense, and an increase to their wants; but in a few years he expands in understanding, discovers a genius, powers of enterprise and faculties of industry, by which he becomes the promising hope of the family. In a little time longer, he enters into business; and evinces such prudence, such wisdom, and such application, that, in a short time, he retrieves the condition of the family, rescues them, as it were, from distress and want, and places them not only in a comfortable condition, but even in the elegancies of rank and fortune.

It may well be said that this child was given to that family for a noble and beneficial purpose, and with the child a genius that accomplished all the salutary results. He redeems the family, if you

will allow me the expression, from poverty, want and distress, and lifts them to a condition far from the calamities of want. I will take one illustration from the history of our common country; and I hope the spirit and sensibility of my audience will support me in using it. When these states were colonies, but had grown to maturity of age and strength, rendering it proper that they should enjoy freedom and independence, that kind providence which had regarded their infant state still watched over them for good. Connected with this situation was a degree of prosperity that moved the envy of the mother country, which operated to induce her to pass parliamentary acts, justly viewed as acts of oppression, and calculated to disallow the privileges of freedom, and to fasten upon the colonies the chains of slavery to the latest generation. While this was going on, that Being, whose all-seeing eye never closes, who never falls asleep, was nursing that person, whose name, no doubt, you delight to hear, and which I may pronounce in this place without offence, even the beloved WASHINGTON. God Almighty gave him to the colonies; and in that gift the genius of liberty, the doctrine of freedom, and

the spirit of enterprise, that was sure to result in the emancipation of this country from the thralldom of tyranny; and he established these states in the enjoyment of all those rights and privileges, which cannot at this moment be enumerated, though you can duly appreciate them. This, then, was a *gift* sent for our preservation, by the great Giver of every good and perfect gift; and, when we contemplate the enjoyments with which we have been blessed in freedom and liberty, we can look up to our Father in heaven, and say, "God be thanked for this blessing."

I will now invite your attention to a few historical instances selected from scripture, by which this same subject may be illustrated. First, I will refer to the history of Joseph, taken by the rude hands of his brethren, who contemplated his total destruction by death, but finally sold him a slave into the land of Egypt. Under the wisdom of Almighty God, however, he afterwards preserved them. How far beyond all human calculation does he extend his goodness, and through what unexpected mediums does he bless mankind! Look on this son of Jacob, when the rude hands of his brethren took him out

of the pit where they had cast him, and sold him to strangers travelling to Gilead, and bade him an everlasting farewell, hoping that they never should see his face any more. From this very moment God Almighty was moving on in his design, to send Joseph before them into Egypt, to be their saviour, when they should come there themselves. They cruelly took the coat of Joseph and dipped it in the blood of a kid, and carried it to their father, in order that he might conclude, in all probability, that Joseph had been torn in pieces by the wild beasts. When the father looked upon the coat and recognized it, how was his heart agonized, and with what sorrow did he bemoan the loss of his favorite son! At the same time was God Almighty giving this family Joseph in the land of Egypt, that, when the time should come when they would be there in want and distress, he should be there before them to save their lives. And what did this result in? In the temporal salvation of all the family. And all the unkindness of Simeon and his brethren was not remembered with condemnation, when Joseph communicated to the family his bounty and favor.

Once more let us refer to the Scriptures. When



the King of Egypt persecuted the Israelites, and, with an edict marked by cruelty, which reached the heart of every family, commanded that every male child which was born among them should be put to death, God was pleased to give to this people a son : “ And to them a child was born, to them a son was given.” It was Moses. It was three months nursed in secret by its mother, and kept from the observing and vigilant officers of the crown ; but danger and fear would not permit the mother any longer to keep it, and she committed it to the providence of God. Carefully she wrapped it up ; and, having placed it in a little bark, deposited it on the margin of the Nile. She sent Miriam, its little sister, at that time but three or four years of age, to watch the child, and see what became of it. I name these small circumstances because they are important ; for, if a strong wind had sprung up, the child would have been swept away ; or, if a crocodile had got his eye upon it, it would have been swallowed up ; but the all-seeing eye of Providence was upon the child. It was a son given to the house of Israel. The little sister watched over the child, and at length Pharaoh’s daughter came ; and when she

came there she heard a voice; and when she had discovered the child, pity and compassion moved her heart towards it. She approached and took it up, and then was the time for its little sister to speak, — “Shall I go and call a nurse?” This was agreed to at once; and Miriam went and called her mother — the mother of Moses. A very good nurse, to be sure; but mark the wisdom and economy of Providence in all this. The mother was directed to nurse it for Pharaoh’s daughter; and when he was sufficiently nursed, he was brought up in the court of Egypt; he was taught in all the learning of the court, which prepared him as a suitable person to perform the great exploits he afterwards did perform. He drew the house of Israel out of the iron furnace, and carried them, by the miracle of God, across the Red Sea; and there they raised songs of praise to their Father in heaven, while Miriam, his sister, and Aaron, his brother, went forth in the dance!

These instances, selected from the history of our country and from scripture, serve as illustrations of the form of expression, “He was born to us, he was given to us,” — that is, for our benefit; and so was Jesus given for the benefit of the world. The

Scriptures inform us that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son for it." God so loved the Hebrews that he gave them Moses; and this Moses says, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear." God gave to the house of Israel Joseph, to be their saviour, their deliverer, when they were in trouble and distress. And give me leave to make one reflection upon this, — one instructive reflection, — that the wickedness of Joseph's brothers never operated as a barrier against his mercy and kindness to them; they were all made to share his bounty, — they were all made to reap of the crop he had sown; and here is a beautiful emblem of the divine character of Jesus. "While we were yet the enemies of Christ, he died for us;" while we were yet his enemies, he contemplated our salvation; while we were yet his enemies, he was acting the part of our Saviour! My friendly hearers, though sin be heinous, though it be an object of such just hatred that every soul ought to abhor it, yet we ought by no means to think that it can change the mind of our unchangeable Father in heaven. We can never say to the grace of the

Redeemer, "Thy ways have proceeded thus far ; hitherto shalt thou come, and here thy proud waves shall be stayed." " For where sin aboundeth, grace doth much more abound ;" and I ask you, in the case of Joseph's brothers, though their sin was red as crimson, did not grace much more abound ? Did not his grace and favor break down the stubbornness of their hearts ; and did not he receive them, and say to them, " I am Joseph, thy brother ; grieve not yourselves that you did it, that you sold me hither : ye thought evil against me ; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive " ?

Now I ask you to consider this all-important question, namely, for what purpose did God give his Son Jesus to the world ? I shall not detain you long on this subject ; yet I have a design to notice the object which some say God had in giving his Son to the world, and to say something as to what I think was the true object. I am apprehensive — I am perfectly satisfied — that there have been doctrines entertained in the Christian church which are not tenable ; and I will say but little more on those points than barely to bring them before you. It is

taught by doctors of divinity that Jesus came into the world to reconcile an angry God — an *angry* God to the world; and they say, in so many words, that he came to open a way whereby we might get to God. Now, you will easily see that this is not true, and that it cannot be true. You will easily see that, if there were anything in the way of God's being gracious to us, *he* would not send his Son as our Saviour; for the act of giving us Christ was an act of love. “God *so loved the world*, that he gave his only begotten Son for it.” John 3: 16. If a parent love a child so well as to give him something, he does not bestow that gift to reconcile himself to the child, but he may to reconcile the child to himself. To suppose that he gave it to reconcile himself to the child, is contrary to nature, reason, and common sense. And how is it possible, if God is the enemy of mankind, that he should give us his Son as our Saviour?

Again, it is represented that Christ came into the world to suffer and die for us, *instead* of us; and that God held out a flaming sword to destroy his people for their iniquity, but Jesus interposed between us and an angry God, to suffer for us. What

sort of a doctrine is this? Did God raise a flaming sword against us? and did Jesus interpose between us and the sword, to suffer for us? If this be so, does it not show that Jesus was more gracious to us than the Father? Yes, and there lies the error. Now, this doctrine is not true. He did not come into the world to suffer the penalty of the law, instead of us. If so, we could sin without suffering; but who can do this? What sin can you commit, without suffering a corresponding evil from it? Does not our Father in heaven say he will reward every one according to his works? and does not Jesus say, "render to every man according to his works"? Matt. 16: 27. He did not come into the world that we might not suffer if we commit sin. Sin and misery are connected in the nature of things; and if we sin, we must suffer for it. Says the hearer, "You will not deny that Christ bore our sins." I know the scripture says he bore our sins, and it is true. But these things explain themselves. When Christ healed the sick, was he made sick instead of the sick man? No, he was not made sick. That is what is meant by his bearing the sickness. He took away the sins of the people, but

he was not a sinner ; he bore the sickness of those whom he healed, but he was not sick in their stead. A physician bears away the sickness of the patient, but he does not become sick in his stead. And Jesus says "that the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick," speaking of transgressors.

It is believed in the Christian church, and has been for a long time taught, that our blessed Saviour came into this world to save us from going to hell ; and it is necessary that we look at the view the Orthodox have of this hell. They hold that it is a wretched, awful place, where the wicked suffer to all eternity. Do we read anything of this in scripture ? No, nothing at all. Can we believe that the anger of the Divine Being has prepared such a place as our brethren the clergy talk about, for the purpose of tormenting his creatures ? Would the same God send his Son into the world to prevent our going into this place ? That is building up with one hand, and pulling down with the other. No, my hearers, it is more like the craft of man than the wisdom of God ! The Scriptures know nothing about such salvation. Jesus was sent into the world to be our Saviour ; and the Scriptures

explain this. God says to Joseph, speaking of the child Jesus, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Mark the distinction between their being saved from *sin*, and saved from *punishment* if they committed sin. Has not God ordained that the wicked shall suffer for their sin? Are not our laws in existence for this purpose? Do we not see that the penal laws of the country sentence some to die on the gallows for their sin, while some for their wickedness are shut up in the penitentiary, and no one can lead a life of wickedness without being wretched and disgraced? Will you say God does not punish sin where sin is? The wrath of God is revealed—that is to say, will some time or other be revealed—against all the wickedness and unrighteousness of man. It is revealed; and we know, by experience, by observation, and by history, that sin has made this world miserable; and it is recorded in scripture that "the righteous shall be recompensed *in the earth*, much more the wicked and the sinner." Prov. 11: 31. This shows that punishment for sin does exist; and here observe that Jesus did not come into the world to save us from the miserable



consequences of folly, if we will transgress ; but he came with the noble and glorious design of effecting our salvation from being sinners. You may take a criminal who has committed an offence, who has been detected in it, and who has been convicted of it, — you cannot save this transgressor of the law from punishment, — that is, lawfully. But if you save him by any means from being a transgressor, — say a thief, — if you prevent him from committing theft, you have wrought his salvation, and you have done a thing worthy of yourselves, and worthy of being approbated by the law ; and all that God gave us the ministry of Christ for was the purpose of reconciling the world to himself, not himself to the world. My brethren, you will then perceive that the work and nature of reconciliation result in this, — to make a sinful world a righteous world ; and therefore it is said by the prophet, “ He shall finish sin and make an end of transgression,” Dan. 10 : 24 ; and Christ says, “ Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” When he preached the doctrine of repentance to his disciples, he says, “ Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” And now mark the language made use of

by our Saviour to recommend repentance — “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” A sinner can no more be saved without repentance, than a sick man can be healed and have his fever left upon him. “Well, then,” says the hearer, “is there any certainty that this glorious work of salvation, for which Christ came, will be ever effected?” My friendly hearers, when we contemplate the great undertaker of this work, and know that our heavenly Father sent his Son for the express purpose of saving mankind from sin, we have no reason to doubt the accomplishment of it. If it had been the undertaking of man, it might have failed; but if it be the undertaking of God, it cannot fail. It certainly will be carried into effect; and all the powers of heaven and earth were given into the hands of the Son, for the glory and honor of the Father. You will grant that God Almighty made the natural sun to rule the day. It does so. He made the moon to rule the night. It does so; and no philosopher or astronomer could discover that they were made for any other purpose than that which they answer. Then will any person be so bold as to say that when the Son of God was sent into the world to

save the world from sin, his coming does not, and will not, answer that purpose? This would be reasoning contrary to all reason, and drawing conclusions contrary to all fair rules.

Jesus was given to the world for this purpose, namely, to effect the salvation of the world from sin. He was given to the world to manifest God's love to the world. He was given to the world that by his suffering he might fulfil all the prophecies recorded in the Old Testament; — to remove that legal dispensation which operated as a wall of partition between Jew and Gentile; so of the twain — that is, Jew and Gentile — to make one new man, so making peace; and to preach the doctrine of Christianity, and to fix it on a rock, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. He was sent into the world to suffer patiently, that so he might set an example to his disciples. He was sent into the world that, through his death and glorious resurrection, we might be introduced into eternal life and immortality. Not to constitute the doctrine of immortality, — not to make it a truth; it was always a glorious truth, and he came to introduce believers to the sweet consolation of eternal life and

immortal blessedness. This is the character of the Son of God, that was born to us, that was given to us.

And, in order that we may close this discourse in a proper manner, let us contemplate how God has blessed us. He has given us the natural sun to enlighten and warm us; and we ought to enjoy this blessing in a manner honorable to God, as well as to the benefit of ourselves. He has given us the earth, that we might cultivate it, and increase the fruits of it in a manner useful and honorable to ourselves. He has given us friends, that we might treat them in such a way as to improve ourselves and them; and he has given us his dear Son, to be a light to lighten the Gentiles. "It is a light thing," says God by the mouth of his prophet, "that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." Isaiah 49 : 6.

This is the language of the Saviour's invitations :  
"If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink.  
Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-

laden, and I will give you rest ; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart ; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matt. 11 : 28—30.

And, again, in the context, " His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.\* Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." This is recorded of the Messiah ; this is also the true character of Jesus. In him you have the doctrine of the Father : love to God, and love to mankind, — mercy, peace, pardon and forgiveness, to every transgressor. We cannot be his disciples without suffering losses and crosses for his honor. A great many people, my hearers, may be convinced of the truth of the sentiments that have been taught to them, and yet, notwithstanding, may reject the true Christian doctrine ; but what does Christ say on this subject ? " He that is ashamed of me, and of my words, in this sinful and adulterous generation, of him will the

\* See Note A.

Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in the glory of his Father, and of the holy angels.”

And this was wonderfully fulfilled in the generation in which our Saviour was on earth ; for they rejected him, and were miserably destroyed by the Romans, and wasted among the nations of the earth ; and similar calamities must ever await those who rebel against the wisdom and authority of God. Let us improve, then, by this blessed gift of God ; and let us improve in imitating the character and following the doctrine of our blessed Saviour ; let us embrace him in spirit, in truth, and in love, to his honor and to his glory, and it will certainly result in our own felicity and benefit.

## SERMON V.

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THEN WILL I TEACH TRANSGRESSORS THY WAYS, AND  
SINNERS SHALL BE CONVERTED UNTO THEE. — Psalm  
51 : 13.

You will perceive, by the first words of this passage, the writer signifies that there was some *preparation* necessary for him, in order to fit him for the work mentioned, namely, to teach transgressors the ways of God. “*Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways.” This was an indication that the writer himself was unfit, in his then present situation, to teach transgressors the ways of God ; but, if something was performed for him by way of preparation, he could enter upon this work. You will be good enough, my friends, to direct your attention carefully to that preparation which was necessary in order to prepare the author of the text for this work. This question is answered in the

context. He acknowledges before God his sins and transgressions, and he uses a variety of phrases to signify the baseness of the moral character which he had formed. He then proceeds in a prayer to God that these transgressions, this iniquity, these sins, might be removed; and the words which he makes use of are such as follow: "wash," "purge," "cleanse;" he prays that he may be washed from his sins; and when this work is done, when he is washed from his sins, when he is purged from his iniquities, then, he says, "will I teach transgressors thy ways." He would be prepared by such a process. Without this process, he was unprepared for such an employment.

The next subject to which I wish you to give your attention is the ways of God. "Then will I teach transgressors thy *ways*." A man cannot teach to others the ways of God until he knows those ways himself. A man cannot teach to others what he himself is not acquainted with. The prophet here prays that he may be washed, cleansed and purged, from all his sins and transgressions, so that he may teach God's ways to the transgressor. I wish to have you carefully attend to what is to be



taught. *The ways of God* are to be taught. Now, my friends, keep your thoughts directly to the text, and observe this question,—What did the prophet mean by the ways of God which he would teach to transgressors? There is no doubt that he meant this, namely, that he would teach his ways in purifying and cleansing the transgressor from sin; for he had just prayed that this work might be done for himself, and when done for him, he then would (as he says to God) teach the transgressor “thy ways.” “Thy ways” in what? *Thy ways in purifying and cleansing sinners and transgressors from sin and transgression.* This idea may be represented by the following simile. A man who is sick might say to a physician, “Physician, remove my infirmities, cure me of these painful disorders which rack my system, mitigate these pains with which I am tormented, restore health to me, and then will I teach other people, troubled with my disorder, how to be recovered from their complaints, how to be cured of their disease, and how they may be restored to health.” I will now bring you an example from the Scriptures. You all recollect the account of Saul of Tarsus, afterwards Paul the

apostle to the Gentiles. Previously to his conversion, he was enraged with madness and passion against the name of Christ and his followers. He was employed in persecuting the saints, and in pursuing, with all the authority of the High Priest of Jerusalem, a scheme of oppression and persecution against all that called on the name of Jesus. In his own honest confession, he reports himself to have been one of the basest of sinners, exceedingly mad against Christianity ; and he confessed that he had done things against the name of Jesus. Now, this man, by the grace of God, and of Jesus Christ, was converted to Christianity, and embraced that faith which he had endeavored to destroy. He was made a willing agent in the ministry of the gospel of eternal life, and went and discharged his duty in proclaiming that gospel of Christ to the Gentiles. Permit me to observe, as an example laid down in my text and context, that here was a sinner cleansed from his sins and converted to God. He felt the blessing of divine grace and mercy ; and this enabled him to teach others, in the same manner, the same doctrine, the same love, the same pardon, which he himself had received, and had been exercised with.

You will perceive it would have been utterly impracticable for him previously to have taught transgressors the ways of God, for he did not know them himself. He could not be the agent of God in converting sinners, that is, to God; for he himself was not thus converted; but, all this being done for him, he was enabled to assist others in bringing them to the knowledge of that grace which he himself had obtained. What he had to do was very easy. He had nothing to do, nothing to teach, nothing to preach, but what he had been instructed in himself, what he had been taught; and when he had been instructed in the gospel of pardoning mercy, in the gospel of redeeming grace, in the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ, and after he himself had become a subject of this pardoning mercy and forgiving grace, how would it answer for him to have thundered out the wrath of an imaginary god? How different is this preaching from our experience! There we see the evil transgressor, the evil opposer of our Lord Jesus Christ, obtaining mercy of God and forgiveness of his sins; and would it have done for him to have preached everlasting condemnation to the persons around him? Nothing could be more

discordant to the nature of the thing; yet how often do we hear people preach in this way! "God hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit." Why not of the letter? "Because the letter killeth; but the spirit giveth life."

Paul was not a minister of death. Why not? Because he had not received death. He had received life from the Lord Jesus, and this was all he preached. He had received pardon, and this was all he had to preach. He had been cleansed from his sins by the grace of the gospel. This is what he had to preach to others; and this is expressed by David. When God had washed him of his sins, cleansed him of his transgressions, and had blotted out his iniquities, then he could teach transgressors the ways of God, and redeem them from death by washing them from their sin and transgression.

The next thing to which I will invite the attention of the audience is, what is implied by the word "teach." "Then will I *teach* transgressors thy ways." Here, my friends, I mean to take advantage of the power given me in these words, to correct what has been the general error in the

Christian church. For this is a part of the duty and labor of your humble servant, — to correct, as far as possible, certain injurious errors, that have existed in the Christian church. But error is to be corrected by authority; and I will correct it by the authority of the gospel. I wish to explain the common error that has existed with respect to the word “teach.” I will endeavor to do it so as to be understood. It is a general sentiment of the Christian church, which is held by all those who are called “orthodox,” that the natural state of man is a state of entire and total depravity, in which he possesses nothing that has the least merit; that he is opposed to all that is good, — naturally so, — and inclined to all evil; so that it is impossible for man, in this natural state, to do anything that is well pleasing to God, but that he stands in need of a radical change of nature, which is called a change from nature to grace. The sentiment supposes the very nature of man is bad; that he must be changed from that state of nature, and become a new creature, by a new creation, in order to inherit the salvation of the gospel. Now, if this doctrine were true, the word “teach” would have no mean-

ing at all. Why not? Because, in teaching, we give to those who are taught no new faculty, no new power, no new ability; but we, by teaching, operate only upon the natural faculties, powers and minds, of those taught. When you send your child to school to learn any science, you do not suppose that the schoolmaster has, in the first place, to change your child from a state of nature to some other state, by which he learns this science? No. So far from this, you expect that when your child goes to school, he carries all the natural powers which are necessary. And it is only an operation performed on the abilities, and on the natural understanding, that brings this child from a state of ignorance to a state of knowledge, — to the knowledge of that which he is to learn; and this is what is meant by teaching. “Then will I *teach* transgressors thy ways.” To teach a transgressor, is not to change him in relation to his nature; but it is to inform him, to instruct him, to bring the powers and faculties of his mind into action, on the subject in which he was before uninstructed.

You will permit me here to observe, that if the work of a radical change were necessary, to talk of

*teaching* transgressors would be conversation without meaning. But, according to the text, transgressors possess all the natural powers, all the abilities, which it is necessary for them to possess; they have nothing in themselves but what is good in its nature; they have nothing but what, in itself, and as to its nature, is right, and just as it should be. All that is necessary for them is to be rightly informed, rightly instructed.

Having advanced so far, we will go a little further in this subject. My friends, it is of importance that we understand that there is no power, no ability, no nature in man, but what is good. It is as good as it ought to be; and, to say that the nature of man is bad, is to look directly up to our Maker, and accuse him of having done all the evil mankind have done. It is the wrong use of our ability that is the cause of all the wrong we are guilty of; not the ability itself that is wrong. There is no power, there is no ability, there is not a passion, there is not an appetite, there is not an inclination, that is bad in itself; nor one, my hearers, that we could do so well without as with. All that is necessary is that they should be rightly employed, that they

should be governed with propriety, that we should do with them according to the dictates of wisdom, of prudence, and understanding. Do this, and all is right. I have given the hint already, and I wish to improve it a little, that it is an injurious error for people to believe that they have not the power to do right. What an awful condition must that person be in who believes that he has not the power to do right! What an awful situation would society be in, were your little children caused to believe that they could not obey you!—that they could do no one thing that was pleasing to you! Could they be placed in a situation more dreadful to themselves, or more opposed to your own feelings? How could you look upon them, and believe they were of such a temper and disposition; and that they were so constituted in nature that it was impossible for them to please you, do what they would! No situation of mind can possibly be more disagreeable than this, nor be attended with more disagreeable consequences. And if we teach men that they can do nothing to please God, I ask you will they try to please him? Hence the necessity of having correct views. Hence the necessity of being taught on this



subject — of knowing well that what is required of us is to use our abilities in the way that wisdom dictates, and all will be well pleasing to God.

I am anxious to illustrate the doctrine I have laid down in the very language of the gospel. This language will satisfactorily prove to you that no change of nature is necessary for the sinner. I say no change *of nature*. Why? Because the language speaks for itself, and it is language that indicates no such thing. For instance, take the language of David now before us. What change *in nature* does he pray for? Does he pray to get changed *in nature*? No. What does he pray for? He prays God to *wash* him. He says, *wash* me; *purge* me, *cleanse* me. Now, what does this language signify? No change in nature. Washing does not change the nature of the thing washed; it only makes that clean which was before unclean. The nature of the thing is the same as it was before. The only difference is that the filthiness is removed, the uncleanness is taken away, by the process of washing. This is all David prays for.

I will prove this position again, by going into the New Testament. The gospel represents the salva-

tion of a sinner, in the words of our blessed Saviour himself, by such similes as follow: "Which of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost; and when he finds it, takes it on his shoulder, rejoicing; and when he cometh home, calleth together his friends and neighbors, and bids them rejoice; for he hath found the sheep which was lost." Here is the representation of the salvation of sinners. The sheep, before it went away, was, of course, a sheep. After it had gone away, it was the same creature. It was a sheep when it was found; and when carried home it was a sheep. Did the sheep become a wolf or a tiger by going away? No. It remained a sheep after it was gone; and, when it was found and returned, it was still a sheep, as before. My friends, what alteration of nature is there in all this process? The wanderer is brought back to the place from whence it went, and is restored to the flock; which is all the change there was, and all that was necessary. There was no change whatever in the nature of the animal.

The next parable on the same subject is, "Or

what woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one, will not light a candle, and search her house diligently until she find it; and when she has found it, calleth her friends, and rejoiceth." That was silver before it was lost; it was silver when it was found; and it was silver when it was restored to the other nine pieces. Possibly it might have dropped in the street, and filth might have adhered to it; — there would be no difficulty in rendering it clean again, but there was no necessity for changing the metal. It was good before it was lost; it was good when it was lost; it was good when it was found; it was good when it was restored. All the change that has taken place is a change of situation or condition. There is no change in *the nature*.

Immediately following this is the memorable parable of the prodigal. "A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty

famine in that land ; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country ; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat ; and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said," &c. It seems he had been wandering in a kind of delirium. "He came to himself;" and the moment he came to himself he remembered how many hired servants his father had, "who had bread enough, and to spare ; while he was perishing with hunger." He therefore forms this resolution : "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be thy son ; make me as one of thy hired servants." No sooner was the resolution formed, than it was executed. It was formed on his coming to himself. He went towards his father's house ; and his father saw him a great way off, and knew him, and had compassion on him, and ran to meet him. He heard his confession, but he replied in no way to the confession. He gave command immediately, "Bring the best robe and put it on him ; put shoes on his feet, and my ring upon

his finger ; kill the fatted calf, and let there be music and dancing." Now, what *change of nature* was there in this case ? This was a son before he went away. Was he not a son before he went away ? Yes. When he came to himself, was there any change in his nature ? No. When he formed the resolution to go home, there was a change of mind, view, thought, or idea ; but there was no change of nature. And as it is said that man lost the image of God by transgression, let me ask, is there any indication of it here ? This son did not lose the image of his family by going abroad ; for it seems the father knew him a great way off. He was then the image of the father, the same as when he went away. The father saw his son's eyes, heard his own voice, thought of his son, and had compassion on him ; he did everything that was necessary for him ; and when the father was complained of by the elder brother for receiving him in this kind and affectionate manner, his answer is most admirable. " It was meet that we should make merry and be glad ; for this thy brother was dead and is alive, was lost and is found." Is there any *change of nature*, my hearers, represented by this parable ? None ;

nothing is represented but a change of condition, a change of situation, a change of circumstances.

Now, will you listen to the words of God by the prophet? Speaking of the vilest of sinners, he says, "Wash you, make you clean." Does this change the nature? "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes." "Cease to do evil, and learn to do well." This is learning, and the best of learning. "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners will be converted unto thee." "Then will I pour clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." The apostle Paul makes use of an expression which ought to be remembered: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, by washing of water with the word." Again, what is recorded in the Revelations? "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." My friends, washing never signifies changing the nature of the thing washed, but it signifies cleansing the thing that is unclean.

Again: "And I will send the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in. But who may abide the day of his coming? for he is like a refiner's fire,

and like fuller's soap." Now, what does a refiner's fire do? Does it change the nature of the metal? No. It separates the dross from the metal. And what does the fuller's soap do? Does it change the nature of the thing to which it is applied? No. Such language is the current language of divine inspiration. And in not one of these passages is there a word said about changing the nature of the being; but only changing the condition and circumstances of it.

I ask your attention, my friends, in the third place, to the concluding words of the text, "And sinners shall be converted unto thee." Now, I ask you what is meant here by "conversion"? What is generally believed is what I have already noticed; that is, a change of nature, — not a change of state, not merely information, not instruction, but a radical change of nature. I will bring you several passages where this word is used. At a certain time the disciples wished to know "who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus calls to him a little child, and sets this little child in the midst, and says, Unless you be *converted* and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom

of heaven." Now, little children are certainly in a state of simple nature ; and if the disciples were converted and brought back into the state of simple nature, they would be fit to enter the kingdom of heaven. And our Saviour gives another testimony of this ; for he says directly, with respect to little children, " For of such are the kingdom of heaven." If little children were totally depraved, would it be necessary for older people to become converted into their state, — that is, into a state of total depravity, — to enter into the kingdom of God ? The meaning might be, that if the hearts of men were brought back to the state of little children, then they would be fit for the kingdom of heaven ; and that meaning would be just right, just what every rational being would naturally suppose.

Another place where the word " converted " is used is where our blessed Saviour spoke to Peter : " When thou art *converted*, strengthen thy brethren." Now, " conversion " there could not be a change of nature ; for Peter had experienced what the New Testament calls " regeneration " before that. Once more, from the apostle James :

" Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth,



and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Now, observe the apostle says, "If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him." A man cannot err from the truth, unless he is in it; and when in it, if he errs from it, he may be converted to truth, — "then let him know that he that converteth the sinner has saved his soul from death." Observe, one who has been in the truth and has erred from it may stand in need of truth, — may stand in need of conversion; but, being restored to truth again, what does this do? Why, it saves his soul from death; that is, the death of sin.

My brethren, to improve our subject to advantage, let us all remember that we are by nature such beings as God would have us; and that all the sin that attaches to us results from the misapplication of the abilities and faculties that God gave us. I would encourage you in this, because I would not have natural society so much disgraced as to have it supposed that mankind, while blessed with reason and understanding, though in a state of simple nature, are not able to do right. If this error is

removed from your minds, what is to prevent you from following the religion of Jesus? But how awful is it to believe that we are all by nature opposed to God, and God to us; and that we are incapacitated to do the will of our heavenly Father. It would be as wrong to say this, as for me to come into your families and teach your children that it was not in their power to do your pleasure; as if I should tell your little ones, "Children, you are in an awful situation! It is not in your power to do one thing to please your parents, unless you are made over again! Your parents are full of wrath and vengeance; and, if they find you in your present condition, they will destroy you in a moment." O, horrible! It would be beyond description horrible! It is doubly horrible to teach the great family of mankind that we never can do anything to please our Father in heaven. And, my hearers, I beseech you to banish from your thoughts such a belief, from the present moment; and always remember that all God requires of you is, "To deal justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly before him."

## SERMON VI.

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AND MIGHT PERFECT THAT WHICH IS LACKING IN YOUR  
FAITH. — 1 Thessalonians 3 : 10.

THE apostle expressed a fervent desire to be present with his brethren, to whom he wrote this epistle, that he might perform this kind office for them, namely, *to perfect what was lacking in their faith*. Our text supposes that those to whom he wrote had received the true faith of the gospel ; but, at the same time, that they had not the benefit of this faith in its perfection. They had attained it only in a degree ; and it was necessary for them to pursue their studies and contemplations regarding that faith which they possessed in the gospel, as it is necessary for people to pay strict attention to the study of any science, in order to become perfected in it. Our text by no means allows the common, vulgar notion, among certain Christians, that a person becomes perfected in the faith of the gospel all

in a moment; and knows as much as he is ever to know by one instantaneous act, which they call conversion.

All knowledge is obtained by degrees; all wisdom is obtained by close application; and there is a *growth* in grace, also, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is as improper for a professor of Christianity to suppose that, because he has entered the school of Jesus Christ, he is perfected in the divine science of the religion of our Saviour, as it would be for a child, sent to school, the moment he enters that school to fancy he knows as much as the preceptor. Yet, my friendly hearers, you will often find it to be the case, in Christian churches, that when one joins the church he joins it full-grown in size; he knows all that he is ever to be taught. He knows the creed, or says he knows it; and that is all he is to know, because he is never allowed to know more. The confession of faith, laid before the catechumen, contains the truth, and nothing but the truth; and nothing more is he allowed to learn but what is contained in that. He knows as much the first day as he is to know forever; and I name these things because they are directly op-

posed to my text. My text supposes that Christians may be imperfect in their faith, and stand in need of this office being done them, — namely, to perfect them in their faith.

Another observation seems to be necessary here, namely, that it is not charitable for us to condemn one another because we do not all exactly agree in the knowledge we have; for this condemnation prevents the enjoyment of the privilege of learning: and if scholars were treated in this way in schools, because they did not all know as much as the schoolmaster, and if the schoolmaster should turn your dear little children out of his school because they did not know as much as he did, when would they learn? They were sent there *to learn*; but, if they are treated in this way, they never will learn. But how often is it that the Christian brethren will hold no communion with a person unless he holds all the dogmas they do! Perhaps he will, if they give him time to learn; but how is he to do it without? Throw away all these partialities, my friendly hearers, and consider you are all the children of God; and as many as wish to learn in the school of the blessed Redeemer go to school together, and have

Christ, not man, for your master, and then you will all advance in knowledge together.

Having made these introductory remarks, I shall proceed to show that, according to some particulars, there is such a thing as *real believers not believing all that is necessary for them to believe*. There is such a thing as Christians coming very far short of that knowledge necessary for them. And the first particular case which I shall mention is that of St. Peter. I have not time to say much with regard to the character of Peter; but it is evident that, before the death of his Master, he had obtained a knowledge of Christ, and of the religion of Christ; yet there were some things which Peter did not believe at that time, which he certainly believed afterwards. You will recollect our Saviour indicates that all his apostles, or disciples, had followed him in the regeneration. These are his words: "You who have followed me in the regeneration," &c. Now, you must perceive that those who followed him in the regeneration did not believe that he would die upon the cross, though he told them he should. They did not believe he would die, and rise again, though he told them so; and, when the event took

place, they all forsook him, and they expected all their hopes were gone forever. After the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, he did not abandon them; he did not excommunicate his apostles, or his disciples, because they did not sooner exercise faith in what he had told them; but he went directly to them, and gave them ocular demonstration of the truth of what he had said.

If we would treat our brethren in this way, it would be much better for us. But what do we do, instead? If one will not believe all that others believe, or profess to believe, they never will let him have an opportunity of knowing what he ought to believe; for they excommunicate. But Jesus went to the unbelieving Thomas, and said, "Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." This is very different from excommunication. He gave the unbelieving Thomas all the evidence he wanted, and brought him to cry out "My Lord and my God!" Such a spirit in the Christian church would work a miracle in our age; it would convert thousands; whereas that cold temper, which excommunicates every brother and

sister who does not comprehend what others do, destroys all peace and happiness.

But now the disciples became believers, and Peter, as well as Thomas, believed. Peter, from this time, followed his Master penitentially; and on the day of Pentecost you hear this faithful servant of our Lord preaching with the tongue of divine love, speaking all languages, and communicating the wonderful work of God in the resurrection of his child Jesus from the dead; and this circumstance resulted in the conversion of more than three thousand souls in one day! Was not Peter then perfected in his faith? Did he not know, on the day of Pentecost, as much as was necessary for him to know? No! He had a lesson after this, in the gospel, that taught him more than all that he had learned before. You will read it in the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. You there find that the angel of the Lord went to a centurion, named Cornelius, and told him to send to Joppa and call one Simon Peter. While the messengers were going after Simon Peter, Peter went up, about the hour of prayer, to the house-top, to pray; and he became very hungry, and would have eaten; but,



while they made ready, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air : and there came a voice from heaven, saying, " Rise, Peter ; kill and eat." Now, Peter had been brought up and educated a Jew ; and the Jewish rites forbade him to eat of anything that was unclean. In this vessel there were things that were unclean, as well as clean ; and Peter replies, according to his education, " Not so, Lord ; for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth." Here he resisted the command of God, and contended for the prejudices of his education ; and he continued to resist the word of the Lord. How remarkable it is that a man will acknowledge the word of God, but will not give up the prejudices of his education ! Now, mark the answer that is given from heaven to Peter : " What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." This was done thrice, and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

I have here to remark to you that all which Peter thought was unclean was taken up into heaven ; and he says he saw it come down from thence. He could not perceive, when it came from heaven, that what comes from heaven must be pure ; but it came down from heaven, and it returned to heaven again. “ Now, while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon’s house, and stood before the gate, and called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, was lodged there. While Peter thought on the vision, the spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee ; arise, therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing, for I have sent them.” Accordingly, Peter went with them, not without some embarrassment, but considerably improved in mind ; and when he entered the house of Cornelius, you know with what tender attention he treats him. He says to the people that were come together, “ Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company with or come unto one of another

nation ; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

Now, we have a great many among us who have not learned so much as Peter ; but we do not give them up. We have given them some lessons of Christianity ; but they must continue to learn, and know that they are not to call any man unclean ; and they must learn that Jesus gave himself a ransom for all men to be testified in due time, that they might thereby be cleansed. But we have no disposition to forbid them the privileges of the church. Let them have all the privileges of the school ; for the more ignorant they are, the more they are in need of instruction. I would here observe that the other disciples of Jesus were just in the situation of Peter, before they learned this ; for you learn in the 11th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles that they were called Christians. And when Peter is summoned to an account by his brethren for going among uncircumcised people, with all calmness possible he heard their complaint, and with his native simplicity he related the whole of his vision, and concluded with these very words : "What was I, that I could withstand God?"

His brethren did not then say to him, "Peter, if you are of opinion that Gentiles are fit objects for this salvation, we will excommunicate you;" but they glorified God, saying, "Then hath God also the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." This was the first time they knew this. These were the first tidings they had of it; and now they learned that the Scriptures were to be a light to lighten the Gentiles. These are facts recorded in Scripture calculated to illustrate the subject before us; and showing that the Christian should grow in grace, and improve in knowledge, in order to be perfect.

Now, I ask your attention to another circumstance,—to the vision of Ezekiel of the holy waters. He informs us that the angel that waited on him measured out a thousand furlongs and led him into the waters, and the waters were up to his ankles. I will say a word or two as to the application of this. We shall suppose, if Ezekiel had stopped here and gone no further, but returned with this experience, he could only have given us an account of these waters which he had seen. Would he have supposed that these waters were fordable? Why, certainly. He had travelled in

them a thousand furlongs, and had only found that the water was up to his ankles. Suppose another person should have told him that that water was too deep for a man to wade in, — he would have contradicted it. But this was not the case. He was favored still further. The angel measured it another thousand furlongs, and there it was up to his knees; and the third time the angel measured, it was up to his loins; and there was a fourth time the angel measured it, and then what does Ezekiel say? “And it was a river that I could not pass over, for the waters were risen; waters to swim in, — a river that could not be passed over.” He did not know all this at once. It was only up to his ankles, at first. He travelled further, and it was up to his knees. He went still further, and it was up to his loins; and still further, and found that it was a river which he could not pass. Here, then, is the propriety of continuing in our march; not stopping and disputing on the margin about some little pebble-stones we may find there, and, as thousands do, deny that this river has become risen waters, and suppose that they can pass, and go beyond it. Thousands think that the opposite shore

is within their reach, and that they can go beyond this river; but Ezekiel travelled in it until he saw no man could pass it; and Paul has this passage of Scripture directly in point, — “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” Hence, we may now say, “Where sin aboundeth, grace doth still much more abound.” This is different doctrine from what many Christians entertain. We condemn nobody for it. We do not expect them to believe in the fulness of the gospel until they have travelled in it.

One word more, and then I have done upon this subject. I will call your attention very particularly to the peculiar and singular circumstances attending the resurrection of Lazarus. When Lazarus was taken sick, his two dear sisters, Martha and Mary, who were both believers in Christ, sent immediately for Jesus; and this was the message sent, — “He whom thou lovest is sick,” meaning Lazarus. At that time Jesus was on the other side of the river Jordan. He did not go immediately, but he staid there until Lazarus died. He did not come where Lazarus lay until four days after he had been dead. After this, he came with his disciples to the place.

When he came, Martha, full of grief and sorrow, says, "Lord, hadst thou been here, my brother had not died." Do you perceive, Martha did not believe he had the power to raise him, when he was once dead? But there was another thing indicated in these words, "Lord, hadst thou been here, my brother would not have died;" namely, this, — "You have come too late. I might have had a brother now living, had you come in season; but the season is past, the opportunity is gone, and I am destitute of a brother and a friend!" Says Jesus, "Where have you laid him?" and advances to the sepulchre. Then she exclaims again, "Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead four days." Now, there is something very peculiar in this. It indicates, in the first place, that she believed and reasoned within herself thus: "If Jesus had been here, my brother would not have died." In the second place, "If he had come before corruption had commenced, he might have raised him from the dead." All this can be clearly seen; for the moment he asked where the body lay, she immediately thought he was going to attempt his resurrection. When, as it seems, she granted that he might have

been raised, if it had been attempted sooner, as she had probably seen Jesus exercise similar power on others; but now, she thinks, it is too late, — it has been so long delayed, that his resurrection is impossible. She had gone, in fact, to the *ne plus ultra* of her faith. She sets it down as a lost case, because corruption had begun; and she says, “Lord, it is too late for the power of resurrection to bring him forth.” There sat the glory of heaven, in all the lustre of his pure holiness; and with the voice of heaven he said, “Lazarus, come forth!” Now Martha was convinced of one fact, which she never conceived possible before. She was now convinced that corruption itself was no barrier to the power of her Lord and Master. Her faith is perfected; but she seemed to step along until the power of resurrection stopped her, and then her living brother stood before her.

I name these things that I may communicate to you, my hearers, this one idea: “When people are setting bounds to the mercy of Jesus Christ, they are only telling us how little they know, — that their faith is weak; but, if they attend to these circumstances and their consequences, generally all that will be found wanting is not wanting in the



grace of God, but in rightly understanding the expression, "Growing in grace and knowledge." Do not suppose you know enough. Do not suppose you have learned all that there is to learn. Do you not know that the most ignorant people are always the most knowing in their own estimation? Yes. Then be careful not to fail in that particular. The way to know things is to investigate them. Do not be afraid of investigating everything, and inquiring into the cause and effect of everything. By these means you will learn; and you will be surprised to see that so many religious people have so long continued to believe what some old popes and cardinals have taught them. You may be mortified that you have not learned the truth before; but that is no matter. Humble yourselves before God, and listen to that testimony which will enable you to grow in grace. Do not grow in contention or animosity among each other; do not grow in a spirit of revenge or retaliation towards your enemies; but walk honestly, uprightly and peaceably, and may God Almighty bless you, and cause your goings forth to be like the morning,—like a morning without clouds, which shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day!

## SERMON VII.

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BUT I CERTIFY TO YOU, BRETHREN, THAT THE GOSPEL WHICH WAS PREACHED OF ME IS NOT AFTER MAN. — Galatians 1 : 11.

A SYSTEM of doctrine which is according to man must, of necessity, have its origin in the wisdom of man, — must partake of the peculiar qualities which distinguish man ; and, of necessity, in all respects wherein man deviates from his Maker, that doctrine which he shall produce will deviate from the doctrine which had its origin in God, and which the wisdom of God has produced. The apostle considered it of importance that he should certify his brethren that the gospel of Jesus Christ was not after man ; that is to say, it was not the production of the “ wisdom of this world,” that cometh to naught. It was not fashioned according to the peculiarities of imperfect man ; but his sentiment is evidently this, — that the gospel which was preached

by Christ was the production of the wisdom of God; and was fashioned, in all respects, according to the mind of God.

I shall attempt, my friends, to show you three peculiar characteristics of the doctrine of man, which will always prove to your understandings that any doctrine which partakes of any of these three characteristics, or all of them, certainly is not from God, but is the production of human invention. In opposition to doctrines of this description, an attempt will be made to illustrate the doctrine of God as dissimilar, in all respects, from the doctrines of men; and to discover it to have the qualities of God, and of God alone.

The peculiar characteristics which are always discoverable in false doctrine are the following:

1. *Inconsistency.* A doctrine that is, and must be, communicated in terms which indicate contradiction and inconsistency, bears on the face of it the peculiar characteristic which proves it to be the production of human wisdom, and not the production of God. There is no doctrine ever produced by the wisdom of this world that does not bear this characteristic; and it is certain that no doctrine

which is inconsistent with itself is the doctrine of God.

2. *Partiality* marks all the false doctrines that are in the world, or ever were in the world; and partiality always proves a doctrine to be false, and not from God. For certainly no doctrine that is *partial* can be the production of divine wisdom; for that is described by St. James thus, "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, *without partiality*, and without hypocrisy." But, my friends, when you hear a doctrine preached, and declared to be directly from heaven, examine it with caution; and, if it partake of partiality, set it down to be false, and attribute it to the wisdom of the world, which cometh to naught.

3. *Unmerciful wrath*. And this is the conclusion of the description that distinguishes and marks all the doctrines of the world, all the systems of men, and proves them to be not of God, but of the wisdom of the world, that cometh to naught.

*Inconsistency, partiality, and unmerciful cruelty!* Put these three together, and they prove a doctrine to be false, and not of God.

I will now ask your attention to a few observations which may be made upon certain tenets that have been looked upon as essential articles of the Christian faith, and so essential as to be absolutely indispensable ; without which, we are told, we deny the Christian faith, and, therefore, are not worthy to be called Christians. What are these ? I will bring forward a clause from the Westminster Catechism ; with profound reverence, however, and honor to the memory of those who framed it, for their labors and their learning, as well as for their piety ; but with no respect for their errors, no honor for falsehood. It is perfectly right to try their creed by the standard of reason, by the standard of the word of God ; and we have a right to try it by the standard of itself. If it be an *inconsistent* creed, it is false ; if it be a *partial* creed, it is false ; and if it be an *unmerciful* creed, it is false : and if it have all these characteristics, it is unworthy the faith of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The sentence I shall recite to you is in answer to this question : “ Into what estate did the fall bring mankind ? A. All mankind, by the fall, lost communion with God ; fell under his wrath and

curse, and so were made liable to all the misery of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever." "Is not that true?" says the hearer. "Is not that the fact?" We will not be in haste to answer. We are trying to see if it be true or not. I will now rehearse to you the very next answer in the Catechism. It is to this question :

"Q. Did God leave all mankind to perish in this state of sin and misery ?

"A. God, of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some —" you will recollect, my hearers, if you please, the word "*some*;" — "all mankind" were contained in the first answer I read to you ; now, the word "*some*" is brought forward — "elected *some* to everlasting life ; did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of a state of sin and misery, and bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer." Now, have I not presented you with the foundation of inconsistency, of partiality, and of unmerciful cruelty ? Have not I presented to you, in that creed, all those characteristics ? Yes, my friends, if God did, from all eternity, elect *some* to everlasting life, were that "*some*" ever made liable to the pains of hell forever ? Your

good sense says, at once, "If they were elected, from all eternity, to salvation, they were not liable to the pains of hell forever."

But these doctors of divinity seem, in the same breath, to say that *some* are and have been elected, from all eternity, to everlasting life; whereas, they have declared that *all* mankind, by the fall, were *liable to the pains of hell forever!* Is that consistency or inconsistency? It is inconsistency. It is a contradiction; it is a proof positive that it is not of the wisdom of God, but of the wisdom of man. After they had stated that *all* mankind were in one condition, they then come forward and state that God elects *some* of the number to everlasting life. I ask, is not that partiality? It is partiality, or it is impossible for language to describe partiality. Is this the language which the divine wisdom makes use of, in treating of the same subject? The framers of the Catechism were speaking of the covenant of grace, and say, "God from all eternity elected *some* to everlasting life, and entered into a covenant of grace, to deliver them," &c. When God Almighty preached the covenant of grace to Abraham, did he use such language? No; but he says, "In

blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee; and in thee shall ALL the nations of the earth be blessed." You see the difference of the language. God says *all* the nations of the earth shall be blessed; these divines say *some*! Can you persuade yourselves that the subject these divines had under consideration was the same as that which Almighty God had in view when he made this promise to Abraham? No; their language differs so much, that you would suppose the subjects must differ. Is this not believed in the Christian church, and is it not made such an article of faith that the Christian fellowship must be denied for want of it, namely, that thousands and millions of the human family, the offspring of God, must be banished from his favor and his love to all eternity, and suffer indescribable torment as long as God or the world exists? Yes. If that is not *unmerciful cruelty*, my hearers, what is?

Now, these three peculiar characteristics certainly discover themselves in that creed. I admonish you, by the force of this argument, that you never receive such creeds yourselves, nor suffer them to be taught to your children. Reconcile that creed



with consistency, reconcile it with impartiality, reconcile it with the boundless grace of our Lord and Saviour, and then receive it. But, if this be impossible, as your own sense will tell you, then reject it. If you have taught such a creed to your tender offspring, God pardon you, and save you from repeating the enormity!

We might investigate other peculiarities and contradictions in the doctrines of men, but it seems to be unnecessary; for you will find in them nothing but a tissue of contradictions; and it is exceedingly mortifying, to a man of sense and feeling, to be told, by men who preach such contradictions, that they are "mysteries." They are *mysteries of iniquity*, my hearers. Contradiction is not the mystery of the gospel. It is the mystery of iniquity!

And now permit me to leave the doctrines of men, and dwell on a theme that is infinitely more sweet and lovely. Let me recommend to you the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, the gospel of your salvation, a system perfectly free from inconsistency, entirely free from partiality, and containing in itself nothing like unmerciful cruelty. In the first place, that the gospel of our Lord Jesus

Christ is destitute of partiality, will be seen by the language which is recorded in the Scriptures. Hear the prophet Isaiah : "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto *all* people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees ; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory ; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces ; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth." — 25 : 6, 8.

My friends, is it possible that divine wisdom would make use of such language as this to represent that God had elected *some* ? No. "In this mountain shall be unto *all* a feast of fat things." You will read language that corresponds with what I have just cited, from the same inspired writer, "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills ; and all nations shall flow unto it." — 2 : 2. Why shall *all* flow unto it ? Because

“a feast of fat things” is there prepared for *all*. The same inspired writer says, speaking on the theme of grace divine, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” —55: 1, 2. Is not such language as this evidently designed to communicate the idea of *impartiality*? Yes, it surely is.

Now, look at the language of the New Testament. Read what our blessed Saviour has done for the world in his suffering and death, and compare that with the language made use of in the creed we have noticed. St. Paul, writing to Timothy, exhorts as follows: “I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for *all men*; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our

Saviour, *who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.*" This is the same God to whom the divines had reference when they said that "God elected *some*"! And now hear what the inspired writer says,—"Who will have *all* men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth;" and he renders the following reason for so saying: "There is one God, and one Mediator, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for **ALL.**"—1 Tim. 2: 1, 6. This is the same blessed Mediator to whom these divines alluded when they said, "God entered into a covenant of grace to deliver *some* from a state of salvation by a *Redeemer.*" The same apostle says again, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he might taste death for *every* man."—Heb. 2: 9. The beloved disciple, whose soul was sweetened by its intimacy with the lovely Jesus, has his creed, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the *whole* world." How different this is from the word "*some*"!

Agreeably with this, we read in the prophecy of Isaiah, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." — 53: 5, 6. Can you gather anything from this language of divine inspiration that indicates inconsistency, partiality, or cruelty? No. Now look at the consistency of this doctrine with the works of God; — how perfectly does it harmonize with the universal providence of God! Here, also, we may see the beauty, excellence and divinity, of this doctrine. The doctrine of universal grace corresponds with the kindness of our heavenly Father, in all his ways, in all his works, and in all his providence. How impartial are the rays of the sun! How impartial are those genial showers that call forth and ripen the fruits of the earth for the use of man! How impartial are the fountains and rivers that flow through our thousands of hills and valleys, to water the face of the earth for the blessing of man and beast! When we look into the wisdom of God, and the

boundless favor of his universal providence, how grateful ought we to feel for such goodness! When we look into the gospel of Jesus Christ, we are doubly inspired with love to our Maker. We there find that the gospel corresponds with all his works in nature; and we see that the universal goodness of God is as impartial in the grace of the gospel as it is in nature. They are equally dispensations of his blessings to the creatures which he has made. This doctrine harmonizes with the very law of heaven. Hear the commandments which God gave: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Here, my hearers, the doctrine of divine grace corresponds with the universality of this command. No human being can yield obedience to this law, without being blest to the full extent of his capacity.

Look at the temper, spirit and disposition, of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and learn if there be any such thing as incon-

sistency, partiality or cruelty, in what he teaches. What was the language of that man — the Son of God — on the cross? He had at that time exerted against him all the cruelty which the malice of his enemies could instigate; and, in that situation, what was the language of our Saviour? “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!” This is the spirit of the religion of Christ. This is the spirit of the doctrine of the gospel which he preached; and God can no more be changed from that to wrath and enmity towards his creatures, than the sun can be changed from the brilliancy which his glorious rays emit to a flood of darkness; for God is unchangeably the same.

We are told that the blessed Saviour, who came into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved, will, at another time, be clothed with the garment of vengeance and wrath; will tread down his enemies beneath his feet, and sink them to everlasting torment. O, my hearers, then is his goodness overcome, indeed! Then, at last, will the cross on which he suffered become the curse of those whom he died to save. And he who suffered for our sins

on the tree of death will condemn us, when on the throne of God, to everlasting misery! What a detraction is this from the dignity, the glory, and the grace of God! "Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound; nevertheless, where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound; that, as sin hath reigned unto death, so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." — Rom. 5: 20, 21.

"I certify you, brethren, that the doctrine which is preached by me is not after man;" and as man did not contrive it, but invented a different doctrine, in the spirit of his own creed he will abuse the doctrine of heaven, and call it not of God, and he will endeavor to stigmatize all those who profess it. He will hold up his own creed in preference to the creed of heaven, and his own wisdom in preference to the wisdom of the Almighty; but, my hearers, you are called upon to exercise the reason and understanding which God has given you, to judge carefully and impartially on these subjects. Decide for yourselves. Independent of the force of education, of the influence of superstition and bigotry, search the Scriptures, to see if these things are so. Re-



member this, my beloved friends : If you are blessed with the belief of God's universal impartial goodness, be cautious that you conform to the principles of it ; and do not profess only, but conform to this doctrine, and live agreeably to it. Be impartial and kind to your fellow-creatures ; act upon the noble principle of your faith ; observe the doctrine of God our Saviour, and observe the harmony of the language of the inspired apostle, — “ The grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared, teaching us that we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world.”

May God give you grace and wisdom, that you may improve by all you have heard, live to his glory on earth, and be prepared to dwell with him in an eternity of bliss !

## SERMON VIII.

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**THE WICKED SHALL BE TURNED INTO HELL, AND ALL THE NATIONS THAT FORGET GOD. — Psalm 9 : 17.**

THE attention of this Christian audience will be directed to the subject under consideration with a peculiar motive. To understand the true signification and import of these words, my friends, is it not reasonable even for our opposers to suppose that we are as much interested as any people can be? Would they suppose that we have adopted the sentiments which we believe without a careful reference to all such passages of Scripture as the one under consideration? And can they persuade themselves to believe we have adopted our sentiments without being able to satisfy ourselves upon such subjects? If they reasoned correctly on this subject, their conclusion would be far otherwise; but they have, no doubt, satisfied themselves that the right manner in which to explain this passage is, that the ever-

lasting and interminable punishment of the wicked in the world to come is taught by it. The usual practice is (a few excepted) for them not to hear how we understand these words; they do not give us an opportunity of explaining these subjects in their houses of worship, nor do they allow their congregations the privilege of hearing for themselves how these things are understood by us. As it respects ourselves, our thoughts of God, our thoughts of eternity, are quite as weighty, quite as full of solemnity, to us, as they can be to any people in the world. We cannot satisfy ourselves by giving the Scriptures a sort of cant; by inventing for them a peculiar turn, in order to give them force and pungency. No, — we have no such disposition. We value our happiness too highly for this. If there is any testimony in scripture against the doctrine we have adopted, we desire to know where it is; we desire to understand the true sense and meaning of it; and if it be of sufficient authority to disprove the doctrine we profess, there is no people more deeply interested in knowing such scripture than we are. On the one hand, the speaker shall by no means allow himself to pass over one

point slightly; on the other, the hearer shall not be allowed to make less or more of any particular point of the text than the text makes of itself, when compared with the scriptures on the same subject. I have one more remark to make before I proceed, and that is by way of caution. I would caution you against the influence of prejudice. You all know that it is highly improper for a person to sit as a judge in a case, where he has prejudged that case. It is highly improper for him to act as a judge, if he is to allow prejudice to decide the case when tried. I therefore ask you to lay aside all prejudice with respect to the passage now under consideration. It has been usually considered that this passage signifies never-ending torment in the world to come. But this evening, at the commencement, I humbly ask you to lay that opinion aside, and say, within your own minds, "We will examine, we will look at the subject, and see if anything else is the meaning." This is the fair way of investigating any subject; and let your opinion and judgment be formed, when you have heard what may be offered. I will suggest a method which may contribute to assist you in the course we may pursue.

I will, in the first place, lay before you the common meaning attached to this subject.

In the second place, I will attempt to disprove that meaning, and to show that such a construction cannot be admitted.

I shall, in the third place, I trust, by God's help, show the genuine signification.

I shall say but little on the first head, because that is well understood. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Hell, in this sentence, is understood by most people to be a state beyond this state of mortality; that God has prepared and constituted, with all the necessary ingredients of misery and torment, a place wherein to render the wicked indescribably wretched, and wretched for ever and ever. This sentiment is the common sentiment of the Christian church, and almost all denominations make use of this text in this way. Preachers from the pulpit declare this sentiment, either from the scripture under consideration, or from other passages of the same sort, which they apply in the same way; and they are in the constant habit of threatening their hearers with terrible destruction, with an eternity of misery, as I

have just noticed. Take your families, and go to the house of God for the purpose of worship. You feel grateful for the blessings of Providence. In going to the sanctuary for the purpose of paying homage to the Deity, in room of having God's grace manifested and revealed through Jesus Christ, the awful denunciations and curses of everlasting wrath and vengeance are poured out upon you and your children. People are rendered wretched, and they go home with the impression that very few of them can escape this everlasting torment. I will appeal to the good sense of this congregation to bear me witness that I have not attempted to give the sense of these words any color not belonging to them. I have not displayed the least ingenuity to harrow up your feelings. I have said nothing as to what is going to take place hereafter. I have said nothing about tearing companion from companion, child from father and mother, brother from sister, or sister from brother; I have said nothing about cutting asunder those sweet ligaments that bind society together. I have by no means attempted to excite your feelings with such a description of the meaning of these words as I have already mentioned. Let those do these

things who believe the doctrine ; but, as to us, the task would be too painful. It belongs to us to disprove this construction of scripture, and to show that the passage under consideration means no such thing. And here you will indulge me in making a few additional remarks, by way of preface. I humbly ask you this question : If this sentiment to which this passage of scripture has been applied be not the true construction, then, I ask, is it not what we owe to God to make this manifest ?

For us to answer this question, it is necessary to see the merit of it. Here, it is pretended by the professors and teachers of divinity, that Almighty God has appointed mankind to all these torments in the eternal world. But suppose, on the other hand, that this is not the case ; then, I ask, has not the character of God been greatly injured by such a representation ? I will make this perfectly clear to your minds by this simile. Suppose I should tell your children they were in danger of receiving destruction at your hands ; and that, if they did not please you, you would torment them in the most awful manner, as long as you could. Suppose this be not the truth ; is it not due to your character to

undeceive your children, and let them know you are not as you were represented to be? Yes, certainly. Look at this subject, and observe another question. Is it not due to your poor, miserable children, to give them a proper idea of your virtue, and to dissuade them from such a sentiment with respect to your character? They do not know whither to turn — to the right, or to the left. They have a fear that they will be tormented, unless they are made different from what they are; and, though they are not capable of making themselves different unless they are changed, they will certainly be liable to destruction. Unless they obey their parents, they will be destroyed; and, being told they are incapable of obeying them, they are filled with perplexity, expecting every moment to be called to an account, and sentenced to interminable destruction. Is it not due to the parent to undeceive the children; and is it not due to the children to be undeceived? Most certainly. Let this case be applied. If this passage be misconstrued in representing God as unmercifully cruel towards mankind, is it not due to the character of God to clear it of its reproach, and that mankind should be undeceived? And is it



not due to mankind to undeceive them with respect to the character of their heavenly Father? Certainly.

One remark more, before we proceed. What is distressing more than anything is this fact, namely, that the horrible doctrine to which this passage has been applied operates most cruelly upon the *most tender and innocent part of society*. It operates chiefly on those tender mothers and feeble sisters who cannot repel these things with the steadiness that others can do. Here we see the mother weeping over her children; we see our dear sisters lamenting the probability of their eternal torment, and perpetually praying that they may be delivered from such a state,—perpetually harassing their souls with the most awful apprehensions. Such a doctrine, I say, operates severely upon the most innocent and affable part of society,—that part we ought to protect and comfort. But, in the room of this, we find ministers busying themselves with the female part of society, and pouring into their ears, as the serpent did into the ear of Eve, the most mischievous doctrines, and tormenting their souls with the agony that this doctrine must inspire.

I have, perhaps, been too long on this subject. However, I will now proceed to disprove this construction of the words under consideration. My first argument, my friends, is the text itself, as it reads; and, allowing this construction to be true, it proves more than the opponent will allow; and this is good ground of argument. Now, hear the words, and hear me record that I give them no turn, but allow them to be understood according to their natural signification. "The wicked *shall* be turned into hell, and *all* the nations that forget God." The text does not intimate that they *may possibly* be turned into hell. There is no conditionality. There is no alternative. It is stated as a positive fact. Some may bring in an objection, and say that it implies a conditionality, and means that they shall be turned into hell *unless they repent*. Read the Scriptures; and, my friendly hearers, let me ask you if it be right to make any addition to the word of God? Is it warrantable to say that the text means what it says nothing about? No; the text says the wicked *shall* be turned into hell. It does not say they shall be turned into hell *unless they repent and believe*. It has no reference to repent-

ance. Repentance is a New Testament doctrine. These words have no reference to believing; there is no conditionality about them. The testimony is, that the wicked *shall* be turned into hell. It *shall* take place. It cannot be prevented.

Now, if you allow it can be prevented, the subject is perverted, and I have no more to say to it; such a construction would destroy the text. But we will not allow this. We will not allow a condition, when a condition is not in the text; but we will contend for the authority of these words directly. "The wicked *shall* be turned into hell, and all nations that forget God." But here is another particular point. Does it mean that all, or only part, of the wicked shall be turned into hell? The reading of the text decides the question. It decides that *all* the wicked shall be turned into hell. It says, "The wicked, and *all* nations that forget God, shall be turned into hell." This is the sober meaning. It means nothing short of it. It means nothing more. The method which I proposed for the consideration of this subject was, that I would show what it says; and then show that, if it has

been applied right, it proves more than they allow who make this use of it.

One question more arises,—how many of the human family do the Scriptures declare have forgotten God? I will not extend my inquiry to the whole population of the world; I will go directly to the author of the text. How many does this sweet psalmist of Israel say? “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are *all* gone aside; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” No, NOT ONE. All had gone out of the way; then all had forgotten God. This is the testimony of the same author. He says, “All the nations that forget God shall be turned into hell;” and then says that “All the people below heaven had forgotten God,” or words of the same purport. Now, I ask, does this not prove more than our opposers will allow? Are they willing to understand that themselves, and all mankind, from Adam to his last offspring, who have forgotten God, — all ministers, all deacons, all people, — shall be turned into hell? Will they allow this? No. Then they would compromise the

question in some way or other, or give up the text. This text says, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." The testimony of the same author says that they, the children of men, are all gone aside. Then they are all wicked, and have forgotten God. Since, therefore, all nations have forgotten God, this is a good argument directly to disprove the application of the text. David, the author of all that has been quoted on this subject, says, "All the nations, whom thou hast made, shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name." He that said, "All nations that forget God shall be turned into hell," now says, "All nations shall worship before the Lord." Now, no nation that he named could be turned into an *endless* hell; because, all the nations of which he spake shall come and worship; and if there were any nations that he did not name, how shall we know what will become of them? I will ask my attentive audience this question, — whether this does not stand a confused subject before you? Can you see any consistency in it, — any meaning? Can you conceive that an inspired writer would first tell you God Almighty decreed that *all* mankind were to be

miserable to all eternity, and then tell you all the nations of the earth shall worship before God? "All nations, all kindred, shall worship before thee." Is this the author of the text? Yes; and this is a man declared to be the prophet of God. He is represented to be moved by holy inspiration, in this testimony.

Now, I will ask one question more: Does the gospel, which whispers peace, pardon, love and salvation, through the mediation of the Son of God, contemplate the salvation of one single individual, unless it be a sinner, or wicked person? Do you learn, from reading the gospel, that it was designed for the salvation of any but sinners? Did not Jesus say, "I come not to call the righteous, but *sinner*s, to repentance"? Does not St. Paul, his faithful servant and follower, speak to the same effect? What says David? That they are to be saved? No; cast into hell! And yet the same David said that all nations should come and worship before God. St. Paul says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world to save sinners." Put these together, and make sense of them. I know what you will

say. You will say the Scriptures are broken, and are made to contradict each other. Why so? They are, my friends, if hell be a place of misery in another world. But, if the hell into which sinners are to be turned be a state from which the wicked can be reclaimed, redeemed and restored, the Scriptures may harmonize; but in no other way.

“Well, then,” says the hearer, “one thing is certainly wanted, in this place. We want to know whether this *hell*, in its proper sense, can be *in this world*, or is it in *another world*?” Well, my friends, I expect to give you perfect satisfaction on this subject, if you are perfectly attentive and candid. The testimony of the same writer is what I shall adduce to prove that the *hell* of which he speaks is *in this world*; and we do no violence to his language so to explain it. What does this writer say about hell? How did David know that the wicked would be turned into hell? He knew it by experience; because he had been a sinner. I need not undertake to prove that he had been a sinner, for you are aware of that fact. He had been wicked, and had been turned into hell; and you have his own testimony for this. For, in the eighty-sixth psalm, he says, “Great is

thy mercy, O Lord ; for *thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.*" Is it possible David said this ? Yes, it is. "*Great is thy mercy, O Lord ; for thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.*"

Is it possible he had been in the lowest hell, and had been delivered from it ? Was he in this world, or in another world, when he wrote thus ? He was in this world. He was flesh and blood ; but he had been in the lowest hell ! God had been merciful towards him, and had delivered him from it. "But," says the objector, "I do not know that that is making a right use of the text. Perhaps all he meant was, that he was prevented from going there. If the pains of that awful torment had seized upon him, he could not have been delivered." In the one hundred and sixteenth psalm and the third verse, he says, "The pains of hell gat hold upon me." Now there is no need of the first words. Here is testimony direct. He says, first, that God had delivered him from the lowest hell ; and then, he says, the pains of hell gat hold of him. He had not only been in the lowest hell, but the pains of hell had *seized upon* him ; and yet he was delivered by the merey of God ! God did not accept of his



going into hell as an atonement, but by his repentance he was delivered from hell.

In addition to the testimony of David, I will give you that of Jonah ; who, when speaking of his deliverance from the belly of the fish,\* says, " Out of the belly of hell cried I unto the Lord, and thou heardest my voice." He must have been there when he cried unto God, and when he cried God heard him. Now, here it is evident that it was possible for Jonah to be in the belly of hell, and for God to hear him when he cried to him. The Bible contains a great many other things, with respect to hell, which prove that it is in this world. Solomon, in his ninth chapter of Proverbs, says, " A foolish woman is clamorous : she is simple, and knoweth nothing. For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city, to call passengers who go right on their ways : whoso is simple, let him turn in hither ; and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there : and that her guests *are in the depths of hell.*" O,

\* See Note B.

my friendly hearers, most assuredly, according to this testimony, every individual who listens to the voice of folly, and deviates from the paths of wisdom and righteousness, finds himself in the lowest depths of hell!\*

Once more, I will give you an instance of the use of the word "hell," and then shall suppose that I have given you enough. St. James says of the tongue,—that "little member," which "boasteth great things,"—"The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the whole course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."† Did you never see men join together, and with their tongues kindle up a fire? Yes. St. James calls that hell. They did it with their tongue, that unclean member, full of deadly poison. O, the tongue, ungoverned, will turn you into hell, and bring you into sorrow and trouble!

I cannot believe that my subject now remains obscure. You must now, I think, understand the true application of this subject, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Every individual who walks in the paths of

\* See Note C.

† See Note D.

wickedness goes into hell; for trouble, perplexity and misery, are the inseparable companions of sin and transgression. All the nations of the earth that practise wickedness are involved in trouble and wickedness. I ask now whether hell is in this world or in another? You must say, in answer, "In this world." Read the history of the Jewish nation. What exalted her? A wise and equal policy, a judicious line of conduct and administration of government, consistent with the laws of righteousness. What threw this nation down from her glory? What blotted her name from heaven? Her transgressions; it was because she sinned against God, and did not do justice towards his Son. What exalted the house of Israel? Their righteousness and piety. What degraded that people lower than any other people? Their disobedience to Heaven. And when our blessed Saviour spoke of their destruction, he said, "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled." And what was written in the law of Moses, with respect to the people who should sin against God, has been accomplished upon that people. Can you read the Scriptures, and know that

the house of Israel was not punished for their sins? No. And now I will ask you a question which comprises what has passed under your own observation.

It is contended, by a deluded ministry, that God does not reward virtue and holiness in the earth, but keeps back the reward until his children shall enter another world. Is this true? I appeal to your own observation; and look away from yourselves, if you are not pleased to observe yourselves. Look at those who are wretched and miserable, destitute of friends in the world, — the most degraded, who have not even the consolation of a good conscience, nor the esteem of society at large. I ask you, have they got into this miserable situation by their well-doing? Do honestly answer me this question. Is it their well-doing which has been the cause of all this misery? No: you know to the contrary. You know it was their idleness, their want of economy, giving themselves up to their blind passions, and following after sinful pleasure. When you look at a dissipated young man, do you not feel an emotion of pity and grief, as you see him ruining himself? What is the cause of this? His vain appe-

tites. He will soon be by the wall, and he is seen staggering about the streets. Can there be a worse hell than this? If you want to see a worse hell, go into that dear family where distress is heightened by family broils, where misery is brought on by the disobedience of children to parents, and the unkindness of parents to children. I ask you, is it righteousness that breaks up the peace of families? Is it well-doing? No; evil conduct. I wish to ask you, now, is it religion, is it virtue, that gives so many inmates to the penitentiary? Is it righteousness that drives so many wretched victims to the gallows, and to confinement for life? No. Now, that is hell; all such misery is hell. The world is full of it. Some are just turning in, some are just turning out; and we pray, and fervently pray, God to keep them out of this condition. It is the inevitable consequence of transgression; and I tell you, old and young, if you transgress, if you do wrong, you must suffer for it. The way to avoid being wretched is to love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself. Let me read a passage of scripture, and you will understand this.

“By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” “Then,” says the hearer, “it is not necessary for me to do good works for the purpose of being saved.” No: “Not of works, lest any man should boast; for we are his workmanship, created in Jesus Christ unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we walk in them.” Now, my friendly hearers, observe that our Saviour saves us “to” good works, not “for” good works; and a man who is saved is only saved from wrong-doing to right-doing. “Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people *from their sins*.” The thing they are saved from is sin; and the thing they are saved to is righteousness.

And now, lest I should weary your patience, I shall submit what I have said to your dispassionate consideration. I appeal to your understandings whether I have perverted the text in any way. I ask you to look, and see if I hold up any doctrine that naturally leads you to do wrong. Do you live lives of virtue, and agreeably to the commands of God, — then you will live in the enjoyment of God,

and of virtue ; but, if you pursue a contrary course, you can neither enjoy God nor virtue.

O, may the good will of him who hedgeth up the ways of the wicked with thorns hedge up your way, my hearers, so that none of you go in sin and transgression ! Then will you be free from misery, and woe, and wretchedness. And let me persuade you to deal justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God ; for this is what God requireth of you : and, if you examine the economy of human life, you will perceive that every inconvenience, and every infelicity, is the consequence of wrong-doing. Is there any poor, wretched soul present, who cries out, in the agonies of his heart, and, as it were, from hell, " I have despised God, — I have given myself up to folly, and wandered so far that I cannot get back " ? To such a one I would say, Remember David's case ; and remember that he was delivered from the lowest hell. If there be such a one among you, I pray God he may be delivered from sin ; and let us all remember that " blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness."

May the Lord give you an appetite for truth, and a hunger and thirst after righteousness ; and may

his spirit lead you to walk in a way that you may enjoy the presence of God, and the approbation of your own conscience! For, in keeping God's commandments, there is a great reward, — a reward of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, and comfort and consolation of pure and undefiled religion. And may God grant, my friends, that this reward, **this joy**, may be yours!



## SERMON IX.

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HEREIN IS LOVE, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, BUT THAT HE LOVED US, AND SENT HIS SON TO BE THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS. BELOVED, IF GOD SO LOVED US, WE OUGHT ALSO TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. — 1 John 4 : 10, 11.

THERE are several very important subjects contained in the passage read for consideration.

The first that invites our attention is this: *that man did not love God.* “Herein is love, *not that we loved God.*” This was not the case. A question is framed on this subject, which is this: What was the reason, what was the cause, of man’s not loving God? There has been a great deal said upon the criminality of the want of love in man towards the Deity. It is our duty, in approaching this subject, to investigate it with caution, — to look into its nature, that we may be capable of judging of it, as we are capable of judging of any other subject of consequence to us.

In order to understand this question correctly, we ask the reason why we do not love anything else? For it is observable, in common life, that there are some things we love, and there are some things we do not love; and, if we can ascertain the cause that leads us to love any object whatever, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the reason why we do not love other objects, we get *data* by which we can answer our question. What, then, is the cause of our delighting in and loving certain objects? "Because," says the hearer, "I see in those objects that which is lovely, or, at least, lovely to my apprehension,—that which is agreeable to me, and the possession of which is calculated to render me blest." Very well. On the other hand, why do you look on other objects with a disgusted eye? "Because," you answer, "there is no beauty in such objects,—there is no loveliness in them. I see nothing in them agreeable to me." I ask you, is it not in your power to love a disagreeable object, as well as an agreeable one? "Why, indeed," you respond, "it is impossible!" Could you not, my friends, love that disagreeable object, if you were threatened with some punishment if you did not love it? Suppose

I stated to you, if you would love such an object of disgust, you should receive great preferment; but, on the other hand, if you did not love that object, you should suffer great deprivation, and, at last, miserable destruction. Then would you not love it? "Why," says the hearer, "to be honest about it, I would become a hypocrite, and say I loved it, when I did not; but, if it was disagreeable to me, I could not love it, though I lost my life if I did not." This is all true. This is simple nature. There is no mystery about it. Then I ask the same question relative to my subject. Why do not men love God? The answer is simply this: because they see no beauty, no loveliness, — they see nothing in him that is agreeable. This is the reason, and all the reason.

Let us be careful how we proceed. Does this suppose that there is no beauty, no loveliness, no worth, in the object? No, it does not; but it supposes we do not see these qualities. To render this more simple, I will suppose that I had the confidence of your little children, and I should tell them that you were their implacable foes, who had planned their destruction, and that they were by no means safe while in your hands. If they should believe

all this, and look up to their parents through the medium of this misrepresentation, they would see no beauty, no excellence, that they could admire ; but they would leave the door of your house, and your children would be gone at once. In this situation, knowing the cause that led them away, what would be your feelings towards them ? Would you hate your children because I deceived them, and through the medium of this deception caused them to dislike you ? No, my hearers, you would love them still, knowing them to be deceived, and that this deception was the only cause of their not loving you. But what would you think of me, who came into your house, and deceived your children in this way, and turned their tender hearts from having any affection, any love towards you, by representing you as their enemy ?

My friends, I do not suppose any man would be so wicked as to tell your children such a story, unless he was deceived himself. But, if I were so deceived as to think your children unsafe in your hands, I might honestly deceive your children. And it was just so with our teachers. They really thought that we were unsafe in God's hands ; they represented

him as our enemy; and while man believes this of God, it is impossible, in the very nature of things, for him to love his Maker. The result of this reasoning is simply this: that the whole reason why mankind do not love God is, because *they do not know him to be a lovely being*. They do not understand his true character; they have fixed on God a character which does not exist; but, when you know his character, you will love him, as, when your deceived children are undeceived, they will love you. Unless they know your true character, it is impossible for them to love you. When we make this discovery, we will suppose we have answered the question. What is the reason why we do not love God? Our answer is, because we do not know his nature, because mankind have been deceived as to his character. They believed him to be their enemy, whereas he is, in fact, their friend.

I will not consume the precious time in describing to you the impropriety that your humble servant discovers in the labors of so many men, who have come forward and preached to the world that mankind were not safe in the hands of their Maker. My hearers, it makes my heart bleed to think how

many sorrows and miseries are endured in consequence of this deception ! But I have a sweet truth to console you. For God loved us when we were entirely destitute of love to him ; when we knew not his divine character, he was engaged in one steady, invariable action of divine benevolence ; and the bosom of God, our author and our creator, was cherishing all his offspring. “ Herein *was* love ; not that we loved God, but he loved us.” O, that you could hear the sentence, and understand its full import. Then would you let God have an everlasting obedience in all your hearts ; then should I hear you exclaim, “ In every situation and under every circumstance, my God loves me.” What indescribable peace, what confidence, what rest of soul, would you constantly enjoy !

The next proposition in our text is, that *God loved us when we did not love him* ; and a question necessarily arises concerning the *justice* of such a love. I name it because our opposers insist this is against his mercy, and even deny that he is disposed to save us. I ask you to come then to the consideration of this question, — Is it right for God to love mankind, when man does not love him ? “ Why,”

says the hearer, "no doubt it is right." That, however, does not answer the question, though it may serve to assist us. It does not discover, you perceive, the nature of the justice of God, in loving us when we do not love him. But we can see the answer in the case I have already stated, of a child who is deceived, and who, because he is deceived, does not love his parent. Is it not perfectly right for you to love the child, notwithstanding this deception? You would look upon the child and say, "That child is deceived; it does not know my heart,— it does not know that my real will and pleasure is to guard its welfare." Certainly, in this case, you would love the child, and it would be perfectly right for you to do so. I ask, would it not be wrong for you not to love it? Very wrong. Then, my hearers, it is just in the nature of the thing for God to love his creatures. He knows that none would hate him, if they knew him. If they knew his real character, it would tend to put a confidence in him; it would tend to enlighten every understanding, and bring all to the knowledge of himself; and this is declared in the Scriptures to be eternal life. For, saith our divine Teacher, "This is life

eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." There is the perfect justice of God's loving the world. We are under obligation to take care of our children, never removing the hand of our providence from them on account of any imperfection in them, but always acting for their benefit. And so does our heavenly Father act towards all the creatures he has made. I ask you, does not this reasoning in the result come to this, that the cause of our not loving God is, that we take him to be an enemy to the works of his hand? Do we not reduce him below the creatures of the earth, and disallow God in heaven the virtues which we boast? Thus we tear the beautiful garment of our heavenly Father's character, and represent it as unlovely.

*Thirdly.* Love is always an active principle, and delights to manifest itself to the beloved object. So a parent who loves his child is always doing good to that child. If you love your neighbor, you will signify that love by some act of kindness, of friendship, of affection. If any want, if any misery, is endured by the object of your affection, how soon do you fly to her relief! how soon do you administer what is requi-



site and necessary ! So it is with God. " Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us." What did he do ? Did he manifest his love by any act ? Yes, he " loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." Mankind were enveloped in transgression, were covered with a veil of sin ; yet God's love was such that he sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. Here, then, observe, the text entirely disproves the doctrine that Jesus came here to suffer and die for us to appease God's wrath, to satisfy his justice, and to reconcile God to mankind. All such doctrine is lost forever, when we come into the light of the text under consideration. How so ? Because the love of God was the occasion of Christ's coming into the world. It would be an egregious error to conceive that God sent his Son into the world to die for the purpose of appeasing his wrath towards the world. Can I state an absurdity greater than to say God sent his Son into the world to die for the purpose of appeasing his own wrath against the world ? There is no sense in it. It is direct contradiction. It is abusing the use of our reason most perniciously. The coming of Christ into the

world was a *consequence*, not a *cause*, of God's love to us.

*Fourthly.* God loves us, "and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." What is meant by propitiation? He does what is stated by St. John, when he says, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He does not take away God's wrath, for there is no such thing; but he takes away the fault. Where is the fault? In the creature. He takes away the sin. Where is the sin? In the creature. The remedy is applied where the defect is. "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Medicine is not necessary to remove the wrath of the physician, but to remove the disorder of the patient. I think you must understand this subject. It is difficult to conceive that the creature is to be tormented in order to be saved. Therefore, our Saviour says, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, to bear witness to the truth." Will that take away the sins of man? Yes. And I will show you the idea in the sin of your little children, which I have adduced. In what way is the sin of your child to be removed, when, in consequence of

being deceived, it is brought to hate its parent? By letting the child know your real character. The moment the child knows your real character, that is the death of all its hatred. The child then loves you; it delights in you, by coming to the knowledge of your real character. Sin would be removed, this moment, from all mankind, if they knew the character of God; we should put our whole trust in him, and there would be no hatred in the human family towards God. Hence Paul says, "God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." He died to manifest the love of God to his creature, man. And, when we see in Christ the character of our heavenly Father, it is then we adore him, then we love him, then we are disposed to honor his name.

Now, what is the result of this? Is it what our enemies say? "No matter what we do; religion is not worth possessing, if God loves us all; and if God loves us all, we would not worship him, we would not read the Scriptures, we would not obey his commandments, we would not love one another." Is this the result? Our enemies, never having been undeceived, really suppose that this doctrine has

such a tendency ; but we have the true result before us. If we believe that God so loved us as to send his Son to die for us, we ought to love one another. This is the result. This is the consequence of the doctrine ; and we, who have discovered his love to us, if we know that he loves those who do not love him, how reasonable is it that we should be led to love one another ! Shall I not love those objects whom my God loves ? Shall I not love all those for whose sins he sent his Son to be a propitiation ? Most assuredly. This is a consequence naturally to be expected, and necessarily, from the proposition we have laid down. In fact, it is impossible it should have any contrary effect upon our hearts. I do not say that all who profess the doctrine do love one another as they ought ; but I have the confidence to say that no one who possesses the real sentiment, the real principle, in his heart, can do otherwise than love all mankind ; and here you will easily perceive that all the commandments of the gospel are to be obeyed. For when you love one another, and love God, what duty is there that will be neglected ? what duty is there that will not be fulfilled ? what is there that will not be done

which ought to be done? If this will not lead us to our duty, what will? Will terror make us do our duty? No; for (referring once more to the similitude), what drove your children away? It was believing the story they were told of your character. What brought them back? Knowing you were good. And know you not that it is "*the goodness of God that leadeth you to repentance*"? Why, then, should not his goodness be preached to sinners? Why should we be told such awful stories with regard to eternity? Why should we be told that there is an everlasting state of burning, in order to induce us to love our Father in heaven? O, incongruous doctrine! Let it be banished from the world, and let the angel of the covenant proclaim the love of God to mankind; and may the world be converted! Man will then love his fellow-man. You will all see that you are the children of God, that you are all the objects of God's love, and all the objects of our Saviour's grace. Believe this truth; treasure it up in your hearts, let your affections move with assent; love God and love one another, and the God of love and peace shall be with you!

## SERMON X.

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THEN SHALL HE SAY TO THOSE ON HIS LEFT HAND, DEPART FROM ME, YE CURSED, INTO EVERLASTING FIRE, PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS. — Matt. 25 : 41.

It is impossible that the audience can contemplate this subject without feeling sensibly the solemnity which such words naturally inspire.

When we take into consideration the common use which divines make of this passage of scripture, when we are seriously called upon to consider it as a subject of discourse, it is expected that every mind will regard it as a subject of the very first importance.

My friends, we feel no disposition to enter into a discussion of this portion of scripture with the spirit of a sect or party. Such a spirit would take from the importance of the subject ; and we would deprecate nothing more. If the common explanation of this

passage be correct, it is no matter of party. It is an awful calamity, proceeding from heaven; and every individual in the world is concerned in it. Party has nothing to do with it; sect, name and denomination, are entirely out of the question. It is no better for one denomination than it is for another; it is no worse for one denomination than for another. Our interest lies entirely in knowing what it truly means. We have no interest in explaining it to mean something that it does not really mean; we have no interest in withholding from it the application which the Saviour designed for it.

You will permit me to state, what you are very well acquainted with, namely, the common doctrine supposed to be supported by this text. The common use of this passage is to apply it to what is called the *last judgment*; and the last judgment, it is supposed, will take place when all mankind, who have lived in past ages, shall be raised from the dead. At the same time, the inhabitants of the earth that are then alive will be brought to judgment, with all those who then shall be raised from the dead. Then there will be a dissolution of this

material system, — of the sun, the moon, and stars, — and mankind will then and there be judged — all of them — exactly according to their conduct here in this mortal state; and if they are found justified, they will be saved in eternal glory; while all the rest — supposed to be vastly the greater part — will be turned off to eternal misery. I have only stated this subject in its summary; there is not time to go into its ramifications, or to consider it with regard to the pernicious bearing it has upon society.

But, my friendly hearers, I feel disposed to invite your serious and candid attention to this question, namely, Does this passage of scripture justly apply to such a subject? And, if our Saviour intended it to apply to such a subject, is it not to be expected that, somewhere in the connection, these things will be indicated? Certainly. Now, if, upon examination, we find none of these things indicated, what must be our conclusion? This: That, whatever it might mean, it could not mean what has been generally supposed. Now, that these words relate to no such subject, we infer from the following considerations:



First, there is no intimation, in all the connection, that this judgment is the *last judgment* that ever will take place. You cannot consider this fact as a matter of indifference. Upon what authority have our divines declared this to be the *last judgment*? I do not make this inquiry invidiously, with any desire or design of casting reflections on my fellow-creatures. I make it because the subject demands it. By what authority have they told us that this was an account of the *last judgment*? There is nothing said about the last judgment here, nor first judgment, nor any judgment numerically. So much, then, we must dispense with, and say they do this without authority. In the second place, I wish to inform you that there is no hint given, in this connection, with regard to the dissolution of this material system. There is no indication whether this earth will remain afterwards as it is now, or not. There is nothing of the kind suggested. Upon what authority, then, is this all declared? In the third place, there is not one word said, in this connection, about the *resurrection of the dead*. Is it said that any of the human family will be raised from the dead, to come to this judgment? Not a word about it.

Now, is it possible that men of learning, of piety, and of honesty, can make such an application of this subject themselves? No, my friends, they do not even dream of such things; but men of piety, learning and honesty, have made this mistake by the force of tradition and education, influences little understood by the common mind. They never thought of asking themselves the question whether these things were true. But all these questions must be asked, all these queries must be put, and all these subjects must be looked into and canvassed, before we can consent to anything so incongruous. Is it such a trifling thing to throw down the works of God, that it may be done with impunity, without proof, without evidence? No; it is too weighty a subject to be treated in this light and incautious manner. These sentiments have done too much mischief already to be treated with superficial observation.

Now, that this passage does not apply to such a subject as has been mentioned, we consider to be very fairly proved by the total silence, through the context, with respect to such a subject. But I shall prove, my friends, another thing, to put the matter

beyond all doubt and scruple in your minds. And I have confidence in saying as much as this, that I shall now prove, by the connection in which this passage is found, that the fulfilment of what is here stated took place in the city in which it was spoken, and in the lifetime of some then present. If we prove this, we overthrow all the use our divines have made of this text. If we do not prove it, we fall short of what we undertake, and you are to go away dissatisfied. My friends, I do really regret this subject is so long as to lead me to be apprehensive of tiring your patience before we shall get through it; and yet I feel encouraged on account of the plainness of it.

The subject under consideration commences in the twenty-third chapter of this gospel, and continues through the whole of the twenty-fourth, and through the whole of the twenty-fifth; and no man ever understood it as it ought to be understood, unless he had carefully read all the connection. At the conclusion of the twenty-third chapter, our Saviour was speaking, in the temple, to the Jews, concerning the awful calamities which were coming upon them, when they had filled up the measure of their

iniquities. In this discourse, part of which is recorded in the conclusion of the twenty-third chapter, our Saviour had given the people to understand that the city and temple would be destroyed. At the conclusion of that address, he expresses the feelings of his heart for the wickedness of the city of Jerusalem; and breaks out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you, desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." He droppeth this hint, that the time would come when they would see him, and should say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Now he leaves the temple, and goes out of it, and is going out of the city. His disciples come immediately to show him (mark the little calculation they had!) how the temple was constructed. It was as much as to say to him, "You prophesy the destruction of this temple. Look at these massy rocks, this immense pile, and consider

whether it is reasonable that all these will be thrown down." Our Saviour says, "There shall not be one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." He then goes out of the city, to the Mount of Olives, which commanded a prospect of the whole place; and there he sat himself down. His disciples come privately, and ask him, "When shall these things be? What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" The Teacher proceeds directly to answer this question. My friends, it has, no doubt, already struck your minds that we have made a mistake. It is very evident, from the question the disciples stated, that they had the end of the world in view; and, therefore, when Jesus answered them, he answered that inquiry; and, therefore, he must have had the end of the world in view. It is granted. They did ask him, and he did answer them concerning *the end of the world*. But, mark one thing. The *end of the world* here means nothing concerning what people generally mean by that phrase. It has no reference to any such subject.

I am now going to intrude upon your patience, with a design of showing you that our Saviour, in

answering this question, alludes to nothing which did not actually take place in that generation in which he lived. "What! do you mean," says the hearer, "that *the end of the world* then took place?" Yes, I mean the end of the world, as here mentioned, did then actually take place. "Why, it is impossible," says the hearer: "the world still exists!" Let your humble servant read, and you will see the world was at an end, but not in the sense in which these words are generally applied.

This I am to make plain by reading. See chapter twenty-four. Jesus wishes them to take heed; and he says, "Take heed that no man deceive you; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." The end of what? The end of the *world!* The end of the world is not yet! It is evident he meant the end of that world they asked him about. "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrow.

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you : and ye shall be hated of all nations, for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." The end of what ? The end of *the world* ? Yes, the end of the world. " And this gospel shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations ; and then shall the end come." What ! the end of the world ? Yes, the end of the world ! The end of the same world which the disciples inquired about. Now, he goes on : " When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." What ! will it be possible to flee into the mountains when the world shall be destroyed ? " Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house : neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And

woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.”

I wish to have you judge whether our Saviour here was speaking of what our divines mean by *the end of the world*. What good would it do them to flee into the mountains, if it were such an end of the world as they describe? What good could it do not to be obliged to flee in the winter, or on the Sabbath? Is there the least possible meaning in all this, according to the common understanding of our divines? But, if our Saviour meant by it the destruction of Jerusalem, by its being environed with the Roman armies, — if he meant that the Roman standard should be in that temple, — it is all perfectly well understood. Then, it would be awful for females, and particularly those in such circumstances as he mentioned, to be overtaken with such usage as might be expected from the soldiers. “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be.” See Matt. 24: 22—27. “For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be



gathered together." That is, the Roman eagles. "And immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Remember this language is all in the connection, and all relates to the same subject.

"Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, THIS GENERATION *shall not pass* TILL ALL THESE THINGS BE FULFILLED. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." My hearers, do you now understand? Here is given an account

of the end of the world ; and, as our Saviour declared, these things took place in THAT GENERATION. "But," says the hearer, "what does it mean by saying that it was the *end of the world* ?" My friends, it means nothing more nor less than the end of the Jewish dispensation and hierarchy, in which the Jews received the law by Moses. This is doing no violence to the passage. The very meaning of the original is *dispensation*. The same word is used by our Saviour, when he says to his disciples "I will be with you always, even to the end of the world." This is the same word, and it here means the end of the gospel dispensation ; and in the passage under consideration it means the end of the legal dispensation, at the destruction of the house of Israel. Did not our Saviour show that it was in his power to fulfil all his words on that subject ? and have they not been completely fulfilled ? for the Jews, as a people, have been in everlasting torment ever since their destruction. And, if you will turn over the historic page, you will see how awfully those culprits have been visited, — exactly with all the curses that have been pronounced by Moses, and also with all our Saviour denounced against them. The Jews

were placed on the left hand, when they were to be miserably destroyed by the Romans; and, if we go further, we find this their calamity limited and confined to the present state of existence. Turn to the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus. Read all that occurs there; read also the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth chapters of Deuteronomy, and you will find that Moses never alluded in any of his writings, he never suggested, that the Jewish people should be punished in another world. He told them that they should be punished by captivity, by famine, by pestilence, but he never alluded to anything beyond this state of existence; and permit me here to observe, when upon this very subject, what St. Luke says (Luke 21 : 22), — “For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.” Our Saviour never denounced any curses that were not written in the law. He never denounced any judgment in another world. He came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil the law.

“But,” says the hearer, “if this language mean only the misery of the Jews, why is the word **FIRE** made use of?” “Everlasting fire, prepared for the

devil and his angels." The word fire is frequently made use of in scripture to represent misery, destruction, and torment. Particularly as we read in Ezekiel (ch. 22 : 18—22, inclusive), — "Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross : all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace ; they are even the dross of silver. I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath ; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you." (See the passage in full.) And, in the language of our Saviour under consideration, spoken to the Jewish people, he no doubt alludes to the same thing, and means they shall be gathered together, and suffer all the torments and afflictions which were written in their law against them by their lawgiver. Now, turn again to the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus, where God promises, after this destruction, after this visitation, if their hearts repent, and they turn to him, and acknowledge him, that he will fulfil his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob ; and our Saviour, in the conclusion of his denunciation, says, "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

We shall not much longer detain you. We shall say one word more before we close, and that shall be said to remove any objection which some may sustain in supposing that we have not comprehended the whole subject. Now, the hearer may say, "I cannot understand why Christ should allude to his coming with his angels and in the glory of his Father, before that event took place, if it did not mean when he should come at the end of the world." I have an answer to this, which I am persuaded will be satisfactory to every one who shall understand it. We see that our Saviour said, *all these things shall take place in THAT GENERATION.* And in the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew, towards the end of the chapter, he says, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." That is to say, it would be in the lifetime of those who were present. This is represented exactly in the same way in the last part of the eighth chapter and in the first part of the ninth chapter of the gospel according to St.

Mark, — “Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” The same will be found in the ninth chapter of the gospel according to St. Luke; in all of which we have the assertion that some of those standing there should not taste of death till they saw the kingdom of God.

Now, all this, if carefully gone over, will show you that the time to which our Saviour alluded was the generation in which he lived. I will only refer you to these passages: Read the latter part of the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew, the whole of the twenty-fourth, the eighth and ninth chapters of Mark, the twenty-first chapter of St. Luke, and the twenty-third chapter of the prophet Jeremiah. Look carefully into these passages; study them in your families; and you will be satisfied with this one truth, namely, that the subject under consideration was never designed by our blessed Saviour to record the awful doctrine taught us by Christian divines; and I cannot help congratulating you on feeling a conviction on this subject. What a relief

will it be to your souls to be delivered from such an awful foreboding! The calamities our blessed Saviour alluded to were calamities which would fall on Jerusalem in that generation; and they did so. But he never did utter one word about the awful punishments hereafter which are supposed by our divines to be threatened in this passage. When he was going to the cross, multitudes of tender females followed him, weeping for his fate; and he turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For, behold the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bear, &c. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; to the hills, Cover us." Why did he not tell them to weep for themselves and children, for that they must be banished from God, and burnt in the *flames of hell* as long as heaven should exist? Why did he talk about the approach of the enemy and the destruction of their temple, and say nothing about the torments that awaited them in another world? It was for this very good reason, — the former was in his mind, the latter was not. He never thought

of any such thing. No, blessed be God, there is no eternal destruction for the children of men ! Will you say, "He uses particularly the word *everlasting*"? If you will read, you will find that many of those things which are called *everlasting* had their whole existence in time. The land of Canaan was an *everlasting* possession to the house of Israel, the covenant of Levi was *everlasting* ; but they were not ENDLESS. *Everlasting* means duration for a long time. There is nothing said here about a future state of existence. You can examine this, and make the subject familiar to yourselves. Do not believe those who tell you that it is dangerous to do this. It is *dangerous only to BIGOTRY*. There is no danger in inquiring after the *truth*. Those who disobey God's commandments, who abuse his word, who trample his precepts under their feet, shall meet with trouble and sorrow ; and then this passage is fulfilled, — "All transgressions and disobedience must meet with a due recompense of reward." This we know by experience, and we need not go into eternity for it. It occurs in the present time. Those who do well are blessed, and those who do evil are cursed. Those who believe the



truth DO enter into rest ; but those who *worship* the BEAST and his IMAGE are *wretched* and *miserable*. But, my dear friends, when you hear the word of God, you will treasure it up and obey it ; make it dear to your souls, follow the religion of Christ Jesus, and you will be blessed in the same.

## SERMON XI.\*

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AND I WILL GIVE YOU PASTORS ACCORDING TO MINE HEART,  
WHICH SHALL FEED YOU WITH KNOWLEDGE AND UNDER-  
STANDING. — Jeremiah 3 : 15.

IN this text is contained a divine promise that the gospel shall be preached to men ; and by this promise we are informed that our heavenly Father, in the gift of this ministry, would not make it subject to the wisdom of the world which cometh to naught, but would regulate it according to his own wisdom, as in the text, — “ I will give you pastors according to mine heart.” Thus it is understood that the ministry which God appoints is appointed not only by his wisdom, but is endowed with that wisdom, that temper and that grace, which is according to the will and disposition of God, — “ I will give you pastors according to mine heart.” According to the

\* This discourse was preached in the saloon of Washington Hall, to an audience of about seven thousand persons.

text read for consideration, the ministry itself, and its pastors, being appointed after God's own heart, shall feed the people with knowledge and understanding. It implies that the pastors should preach those things which they know to be true, and which the people can understand; for we learn from the text that they shall be endowed with understanding and with knowledge; — and, being thus endued, they must know that they never feed the people with understanding, unless they preach to them what they can understand.

Now, in the first place, my friendly hearers, when God appoints pastors to the people according to his heart, they are educated by *his* wisdom, they are actuated by *his* will, and they are employed entirely in the promulgation of that which is consistent with the mind of him that sent them. When the wisdom of the world appoints a ministry, it appoints a ministry according to its own heart and its own wisdom. If any church appoints a ministry, it appoints it according to its own heart, and according to its own interests. Thus we may say (and I hope without giving offence), that if any particular theological school appoints a ministry and

sends forth ministers, both the ministry and the ministers will be according to the wisdom, the will and disposition, of that theological school. Such a school as the theological institution at Jerusalem, where Gamaliel was the doctor or teacher, would furnish such a ministry, and such a minister as Saul of Tarsus, the person who was an enemy to Jesus Christ, an enemy to the gospel, an enemy to all that named the name of Christ; and yet Saul was faithful to the theological school that appointed him, and endeavored to promote the honor, dignity and authority, of those that sent him forth. None but God himself, through the mediation of his blessed Son Jesus, could make such a minister as St. Paul, who was converted from the school and doctrine in which he had been educated, and was adopted as the child of Jesus Christ, — adopted into the school of our great Redeemer; and, as before he had no other interest but the interest of the church that appointed him, so now he has no other interest but the interest of the Almighty, who converted him and appointed him to the labors of the gospel, whereby he now becomes a disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus. He has no interest to promote or serve but

the interest of the crucified Redeemer ; and, being brought into his service, he boldly proclaims the gospel of the Son of God. I would add, it is very practicable and possible, from motives which have a peculiar influence on the human mind, for an individual to appoint *himself* to the work of the ministry, and set *himself* up as a teacher ; and he will tell you it is dangerous not to believe and not to receive his preaching as truth, because he is a minister after God's heart. How shall we know whether he is or not ? Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, — "*He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory.*" My friends, you may always know a false teacher from a true one. It is the easiest thing in the world. How will you know him ? He will always set *himself* up above God. He will always represent himself to be more lovely, if possible, than he will allow our Saviour to be. He will tell you how much he would do to save you. He would lay down his life to save one poor soul ; but he will not allow the Redeemer, who did lay down his life for us, the power of saving you. Now, which is best, the preacher, or his master ? Why, according to his own account, the preacher. Yes,

he is the best himself; because, in the room of being in the cause of his Divine Master, he is in his own cause. And, instead of endeavoring to get people to love the Lord Jesus Christ, he is interested in making them love *himself*; for he is holding himself up as being more interested in their salvation than he will allow the Redeemer to be. My hearers, there is no difficulty in determining this question, in distinguishing a minister of the Lord from a minister of the wisdom of this world. The minister of this world's wisdom has not the cause of God, nor of our Redeemer, to promote. Mankind, in their carnal hearts, have not the interest of the gospel to promote. They will persuade you to believe that in God's hands you are not safe; that all God has done, that all Jesus Christ has done, for you, will not secure you, but, if you will subscribe to their creed, you will be secure. Now, really, these people stand directly between God and the human family; and they try to direct all our attention to themselves, and not to God.

I will name a few things, which I humbly ask you to hear, and charitably to consider; for I call God to witness, I feel no enmity towards any name

denomination or sect, under heaven ; but I have a certain object in view, which comes in contact with their errors. I shall lay before you some of them. I shall present to your notice certain things preached and held up as doctrine in the Christian church, and as the doctrine of the gospel, which are indispensable articles of faith. I will not undertake to prove them false, but will only ask, Do those who preach them *know* them to be true ? I will ask, at the same time, this question, Do they *understand* them, and are the people capable of *understanding* them ? and if we are convinced that no man can understand such doctrines, then we know that they never could give people knowledge.

In the first place, What is so difficult to believe as what is called in Orthodox divinity an indispensable article of the Christian faith, namely, the fall of *man* through Adam's transgression, the consequence of which extends to all posterity ? The offence of Adam was not visited upon himself alone ; but all the generations that existed, or shall exist, are made liable, not only to all the miseries of this life, and death itself, but to the pains of hell forever. My friends, I say I have not now an oppor-

tunity to disprove this doctrine. I will not now labor to disprove it ; I shall only ask, Was this doctrine ever *known* to be a fact by any man living ? Did ever any man possess such a knowledge as to come forward and say he *knew* this doctrine to be a fact ? I ask again, Was there ever a man in the world who could *understand* it, if it were a fact ? Was it ever explained that God, who is not the friend of sin, made all his human creatures, from the transgression of Adam, liable to sin to all eternity ? Because, without a miracle, it could not be that the fall of Adam would entail misery on all mankind. It must be by a miracle. But was it ever understood by any human being ? “No,” says the hearer, “I never could understand it.” No, my hearers ; and those who preach such a doctrine do not understand this doctrine better than you. There never was a man who did. I am saying nothing, at present, about its not being true ; but I say all those who preach it never knew the fact themselves ; they never understood it themselves, nor made anybody else understand it. It is just as much in the dark now, as when it was invented by the wisdom of the world.



Another doctrine, or point of doctrine, considered as indispensable, is that which is termed particular election and reprobation; in which it is taught that God from all eternity elected a few individuals here and there, and ordained that they should enjoy everlasting life and happiness in the world to come, while, by his own wisdom, he dooms far the greater part to everlasting misery; and all this was fixed and determined in his own mind before man was created. I will not attempt to prove such a doctrine false, because it would be a kind of reflection on your good sense. If such a doctrine were true, was there ever a man that *knew* it to be so? and I ask again, Was it ever explained to the *understanding* of any person, so that he could understand it, as a matter of fact? No; for those who proclaim it tell you that it is one of the hidden mysteries of Almighty God. I should rather say, it is one of the mysteries of iniquity. I say it is a proposition which no man could ever understand; and no man who ever preached it to the people fed them with knowledge while he was preaching it.

Another doctrine, that has been held in equal estimation in the Christian church by doctors of divi-

ity, is this : that we, as we come into the world, are naturally opposed to our Creator, and all his commands. My friends, if this were a fact, is there a man in all the world who could say he *knew* it ? Is there a man who could say he *understood* it ? No. Were such a doctrine a truth, it is impossible that it should be *known* or *understood* by man. I will call your attention to the consideration of the testimony of the blessed Jesus, who, on account of a certain controversy, called to him a little child ; and he said to his disciples, "Except ye be converted, and become as this little child, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." What was the condition of the child ? According to the doctrine I have just mentioned, it was opposed to God. It was a being entirely deprived of communion with God. And yet, my dear hearers, our Saviour was speaking of his disciples' being converted, and becoming *like a little child*, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. I ask you, Can you reconcile such testimony with the common doctrine of the depraved disposition of little children ? No, it cannot be reconciled, and people are not fed with knowledge or understanding when they are taught

such doctrine. It will not be doubted that little children are in a state of simple nature ; and yet our Saviour says, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Another doctrine that has been held in equal estimation by the Christian church, which has been taught by doctors of divinity, and which, of course, demands our notice here, is concerning the exposure of *all* mankind to the pains of hell forever, in consequence of the transgression of Adam ; and yet the eternal security of some, according to the election of grace. Do not these doctors say that from all eternity *some* were elected to everlasting life ? Yes. Did they *understand* this ? Did they understand that those who were elected from all eternity to everlasting life were made liable to the pains of hell forever, by the transgression of Adam ? No ; they did not understand it, because that would make it appear that the Almighty was inconsistent. Did they understand what they said, when they intimated that not only those who were not elected, but even those who were elected, were doomed, from all eternity, to endure endless misery, for Adam's

transgression? They certainly did not, because one proposition is in diametrical opposition to the other; and when this doctrine is taught to the people, they are neither fed with *knowledge* nor *understanding*.

Another doctrine, in intimate connection with the others I have mentioned, amounts to this: that, as we exist naturally, and were brought forth into the world, it is not in our power to think of or to perform one single action well pleasing to God; that we sin in everything we do, till we are regenerated, or born again. Is this doctrine understood? Is it a fact that, when a man takes care of his family, when he loves his companion, when he feeds and clothes all those who are dependent on him, that he cannot, that he does not, do right? Is there anything like this in the doctrine of the Scriptures, or the word of God? No. Does any man understand it? No man. Then no man can be fed with knowledge by it.

Another doctrine which I wish to name is one universally contended for in the Christian church. It is, that God has seen fit, in his wisdom, not to punish sin in this world, where it is committed,—he

does not reward virtue here, where it is practised, — but in another world, where we hope to be more virtuous than we are here. Do the clergy *know* God does not punish wickedness in this world? No. I have a question to put to those who administer the penal laws of our country, and also to those who make them. I would ask them whether, in their view, we can do best in society without the law or with it. “Why, with it, to be sure.” Very well. Is not the administration of public justice declared in the Scriptures to be of God? and are not rulers ministers of God for good, to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to those who do well, and who hold not the sword in vain? Are these laws and these punishments according to the wisdom of God? So far as they are just, they certainly are. God has ordained laws on earth by which vice is punished, and we see the wicked *are* miserable beings in the present time. Every day we are under the necessity of punishing those who commit crime, and every day’s experience convinces us that the way of the transgressor is hard. “There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God.” Is it true that man is made happy by living in sin? Is it a fact that **the**

righteous live in misery, wretchedness and want, in this world? You know to the contrary. When your eyes are open, when you inspect the state of society, and look around you, you see that those who live in peace and happiness are the virtuous part of the community; they are those who honor God by obeying his commandments.

Look at those who are destitute of the enjoyments of this world, — who are crushed under misery, wretchedness and degradation. Has righteousness brought them to this? Has a godly life brought them to this? “I have been young,” says the Psalmist, “and now I am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” If you will look into the miseries of this description, and see the dreadful calamities which afflict the wicked, you will see that God has inseparably connected sin with misery, and righteousness with happiness, in the present life. Hence, then, when you are told that sin is not punished in this world, you must know it is false; and when you are told virtue does not make a man happy in this world, you are told what every man knows to be untrue. When

this doctrine is preached, the people are not fed with *knowledge* or *understanding*.

And lastly, upon this subject, I will mention another thing which is considered indispensable, according to the creed of the church, namely, that God who made us will make a great portion of us eternally miserable; and you cannot be a suitable member of the Christian church, it is supposed, unless you believe this fundamental article of their creed; or, being a member, you must be excluded unless you continue to hold it sacred and true. Is this honorable to God? Is it honorable to his creatures? How awful is the idea! To say that God will employ himself, or, what is the same thing, his agent, in tormenting the creatures he has made! If this be honorable to God, I ask the question, What is dishonorable to him? Many of you, my hearers, are parents; and could I dishonor you more, on my return home, than to say the parents in the city of Philadelphia, out of a large family, selected two or three as favorites, and made the rest miserable? It would be asked, What do they do this for? For their honor, and for the gratification of the two or three favorites! They could not enjoy happiness

or felicity, if their brothers and sisters were blessed as much as themselves ! I could not dishonor you more than by doing this ; and, thank God, I could not tell a greater falsehood ! But, when divines tell you this story about God, such is the force of education and superstition, that you find no fault with it. But it has got to be time for people to open their eyes and ask, "Where have we been walking ?" May God forgive those who have taught such a doctrine ; and may he obliterate it from the human heart, and take it away from society !\*

I shall refrain from remarking on these subjects, to ask your attention, a few moments, to what you can understand. Our text says, "They shall feed you with knowledge and with understanding." Our blessed Saviour went before his disciples. He taught them in his own school ; he taught them how to teach ; and what was the doctrine he preached to the people ? "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy : but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully

\* See Note E.



use you, and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven : for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

Do, my friends, let me compare this with the doctrine of our divines. Did you ever hear them preach on personal election, and undertake to demonstrate it by such a simile as this? No, they never preach it; and the reason is, it would make God better than themselves! But our blessed Saviour preached the universality and impartiality of the blessings of Providence, in order to discover the excellency of his heavenly Father, that we might know his nature, and always love him. You need not go to the creed of man to find out the excellency of that knowledge and understanding wherewith Christ fed his disciples. Your blessed Saviour comes to the affection of your hearts, — "What man is there, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or, if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask him!" Did you ever hear similes like this offered

to prove the doctrine of the church? No; but I can demonstrate what I say by your own hearts. You know you take a pleasure and delight in doing good to those whom you love; and so it is with our Father in heaven. But our divines never preach in this way.

Let us now take the similes by which the gospel of Jesus is represented in the Scriptures. "He shall be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the salvation of God to the end of the earth." The gospel is compared to a river of pure water, wherein he that thirsteth may drink. It is compared to bread, of which a man may eat and never die. How sensibly these similes are calculated to instruct us! How much better are these sentiments calculated to inspire us with reverence and love for our heavenly Father! O, could you believe this, how would your hearts be delighted, how would God live in your affections and esteem! But, when he is represented to be a tyrant, preparing everlasting torments for his children, you cannot love him, you cannot adore him! You would never cease to say, "I cannot love the God who made me; for he has decreed that my dear children, and the companion of my

bosom, shall welter in everlasting misery!" God forbid that any poor soul should believe such a doctrine; and God forbid that any man or woman living in the world should from henceforth subscribe to such a creed! The disciples never preached such a doctrine. They never preached a doctrine different from their Master. They went into the congregations to preach the love of God to the world, — "For where sin abounded grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." "God our Saviour will have *all* men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; for there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the *man* Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for *all*, to be testified in due time." "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him."

“ For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

So I might go on, my friendly hearers, and recite the language of divine inspiration ; and every sentence, every principle of the gospel, harmonizes with this doctrine of God’s love. And what is the conclusion of this doctrine ? It is this, — “ Since God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” It is declared, in one of the passages I have recited, that God will have *all* men to be saved. How, then, can you reconcile this with the doctrine of our Orthodox divines, that God from all eternity elected only a *few* to be saved, and decreed that by far the greater portion of the human family should be sent to endless misery, as long as his throne should endure ? You must know yourselves that this is dishonorable to God, — it is dishonorable to man.

In the result, it is the very design of the gospel to introduce mankind to peace and happiness. The coming of our Saviour was not to appease the wrath of Heaven towards man, but to introduce to us “ love to God, and good will towards man.” This is the doctrine of God ; this is the doctrine of our Saviour ; and I charge you never to believe any doc

trine dishonorable to God. Any doctrine which can be reconciled with God's universal goodness is safe to be believed, because it gives peace and comfort in believing; but a doctrine which cannot be reconciled with the goodness of God gives no peace to the believer, and therefore cannot be true.

May God grant, then, that you, my friendly and much-respected hearers, may be fed with knowledge and understanding; and that you may use them to the glory of God, to the honor of Jesus Christ, and to the peace and happiness of yourselves!



## NOTES.

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NOTE A. See page 79

*The Mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.* — Some have regretted that there had not been a critical explanation of these phrases, as applied to the Messiah, or Son of God ; but, not being contained in the words selected as the subject of discourse, it could hardly have been expected, especially as the sole object of the discourse was to show that this Son, in whatever light he may be considered, was *given* for the benefit of mankind ; and it must be obvious to all, that in every gift there is implied the giver, the thing given, and the recipient ; and it would be no more absurd to say that the gift and the recipient are one, than it is to say that the giver and the gift are numerically one. It is not because we discover the least difficulty in these appellations given to the Messiah that we express a doubt concerning them, but because they are all wanting in the Vatican, which is considered the most authentic copy of the Septuagint ; and in the last printed edition they are left out of the text, and placed only in the margin. Nevertheless, as these appellations are all found in the Hebrew text, we are not disposed to reject them. But they are, after all, by no means indicative of the nature of the being to whom they are applied, but only to his

character. "His *name* shall be *called*," &c., — not that "his *nature* shall *be*," &c. Calling a person by any name whatever adds nothing to his nature. But it may be said the nature of the Messiah was such as to render all these appellations proper, or else they would not have been given to him. To this we do not object. Let us now examine the names, and see what they imply. Let us see whether they necessarily imply a different nature from that of Moses and the prophets.

"*Wonderful*." What is there in this that will not apply to Moses, as well as Jesus? It will not be pretended but that the works of Moses were equally wonderful with those of Jesus; for, if they were not so, how will it be maintained that they were of God?

"*Counsellor*." If Christ be our counsellor, was not Moses also a counsellor to Israel? This will not be denied.

"*The Mighty God*." The word here rendered God is not *Aleim*, which is rendered God Gen. 1 : 1, and which is applied to Moses Ex. 7 : 1; but it is *Al*, a word of very extensive meaning. Mr. Parkhurst, in his Hebrew Lexicon, says, "This is one of the most difficult roots in the Hebrew language, and various methods have been taken by learned men to account for its several applications. After the most attentive consideration, I think the notion of *interposition*, *intervention*, or the like, bids the fairest for the ideal meaning of it, and best reconciles its different uses." Suppose, then, we call this Son given "The mighty *Interposer*," how much would this differ from the "Mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus"? 1 Tim. 2 : 5. In an ancient folio Bible, in five volumes, entitled, "*Bibla Sacra Hebraice, Chaldaice, Græce, et Latine*," the Hebrew of this phrase is



rendered in Latin *Deus fortis*, and the Greek is rendered in Latin *Deus fortis, potens*. The first of these phrases we should render *the valiant God*; the second, *a God pre-eminently valiant*, or, *the valiant God, having pre-eminence*. If we examine, also, both the Hebrew and the Greek, we find that this is the most that can be made out of either; and any one must perceive that the phrase is more applicable to one whom God has raised up and exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, than it is to God himself; yea, such a phrase, while it highly exalts the dignity of man, would, if applied to the Supreme God of the universe, certainly lessen the dignity of his character.

“*The Everlasting Father.*” The Hebrew word here rendered *everlasting* in its general import “denotes *beyond, further, or besides* somewhat else. As a particle of time, *yet, still, moreover, a long while, until, whilst, during the time that, all along, perpetually.*” It is used Isa. 47: 7, where it is rendered *forever*. The words under consideration are rendered by the LXX, *patet tou mellontos aionos*, and in the Latin of the *Bibla Sacra*, referred to above, *pater futuri seculi*, *the father of the future age*; and, admitting the passage to be genuine, this is what we take to be its true import.

“*The Prince of Peace.*” These words certainly cannot imply anything more than may be justly applied to man.

Yates, in his vindication of Unitarianism against the attack of Wardlaw, takes particular notice of the two passages Isaiah 7: 14 and 9: 6. His remarks are worthy of repeated perusal.

If the title God belonged to all “unto whom the word of God came,” John 10: 34, 25, these two passages would present no obstacle to our belief in the Unitarian

doctrine, even though it were certain that in each instance the original text is uncorrupted, the English translation correct, and the designations "IMMANUEL" and "MIGHTY GOD" really intended to be descriptive of the *nature of Christ*. These titles would only convey the same ideas which were expressed by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, when they exclaimed, "A GREAT PROPHET is risen up among us," and by the two disciples (Luke 22 : 19) who described Jesus of Nazareth as "A PROPHET MIGHTY *in deed and word*."

In order to perceive the true meaning of IMMANUEL, it is necessary to consider the singular manner in which *proper names* were formed and applied to the ancient Hebrews. It was common among them to give to their children names which were in reality short sentences, expressive of some divine favor conferred at the time of the child's birth. Thus Hagar called her new-born son ISHMAEL, which is, being interpreted, GOD HATH HEARD ! an exclamation expressive of her joy that God had heard her affliction (Gen. 16 : 11). Agreeably to the same idiom most other Scripture names are to be understood.

In the third verse of the chapter in which IMMANUEL occurs, mention is made of one of the sons of Isaiah under the name of SHEAR-JASHUB. This name is a complete sentence. Literally translated, it is, A REMNANT SHALL RETURN. The son of Isaiah was called by this singular appellation in order that the great and consolatory fact of the *return of a remnant* of the Jewish nation from captivity, which was the frequent burthen of his prophecy, might, by the appearance of his son, bearing this expressive name, be often recalled to his mind, and to the minds of his countrymen. Also, in the next chapter, which is a continuation of the same prophecy, and relates to the

same events, we are informed that Isaiah had another son, concerning whom the LORD said to him (ver. 3), Call his name MAHER SHALAL HASH BAZ. This signifies, THE SPOILING HASTENETH, THE PREYING COMETH QUICKLY. The Divine command was intended and understood as an intimation that soon after this child's birth the Jews would be victorious over their enemies, and the time of spoiling their vanquished foes would arrive. Accordingly, the reason for giving this name is assigned in the next verse in the following terms: "For before the child shall have knowledge to cry My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the King of Assyria."

In consequence of this singular custom of giving names to children descriptive of the circumstances of their birth, it became usual with the prophets to denote an event, which was about to accompany the birth of a child, by saying that the child would have *a name descriptive of that event*. Among the Jews this remarkable mode of speaking was well understood, although it is little adapted to the habits of our age and nation. These facts must be borne in mind as leading to the exact interpretation of the title IMMANUEL, which signifies GOD IS WITH US. It was intended to signify that, at the time of the child's birth, *God would be with his people by extraordinary manifestations of his favor*. Hence the prophet, in the next chapter, foretelling the defeat of the enemies of Judah, assigns its cause by repeating the *affirmation*, GOD IS WITH US, or IMMANUEL, which a little before he employs as the *name* of the child (ver. 9, 10). "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall

be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to naught ; speak the word, and it shall not stand : FOR IMMANUEL ! GOD IS WITH US ! ”

It is generally agreed that, *in its primary application*, this passage related to the birth of a child within a few years from the publication of the prophecy. Bishop Lowth remarks that, though “ not excluding a higher secondary sense, *the obvious and literal* meaning of the prophecy is this : that within the time that a young woman, now a virgin, should conceive and bring forth a child, and that child should arrive at such an age as to distinguish between good and evil, — *that is*, within a few years (compare ch. 8 : 4), — the enemies of Judah should be destroyed.” As a sign of the destruction of Judah, the child to be born at that time was to be called IMMANUEL ! GOD IS WITH US ! and all that was meant by the exclamation GOD IS WITH US ! was, that God would at that time appear in a remarkable manner as the protector and benefactor of his people. When applied according to the “ *higher secondary sense* ” of the prophecy, it had the same meaning. It signified that *when the Messiah arose God would bestow great blessings upon mankind*. In this sense all serious Unitarians entertain the most grateful conviction that GOD WAS, and, so long as the gospel of his Son shall continue to illuminate, console and reclaim mankind, that HE IS WITH US.

Thus, I have no doubt, the passage of Isaiah was understood by the writer, who has applied it to the birth of Jesus Christ. At the same time, I am aware that this interpretation is by no means *obvious* to those who have not paid much attention to the idioms of the Scriptures, and that it may easily be held up to ridicule by the inconsiderate.

Bishop Lowth observes, concerning this portion of the prophecies of Isaiah (ch. 7—9 : 6), that there are in it “many great difficulties.” The verse which is quoted to prove the Divinity of Christ, on account of the phrases “*mighty God*,” although produced by the ignorant with the most triumphant and unreflecting confidence, will probably be allowed by all competent judges to be attended with as great difficulties as any other verse in this confessedly obscure portion of sacred Scripture. I am sensible that it would be highly presumptuous in me to attempt to decide the various questions relating to it, about which the most eminent critics, both in foreign countries and in our own, have differed, and continue to differ ; such as, whether the word *AL*, translated *God*, to which there is nothing corresponding in any of the ancient Greek versions, be a genuine part of the Hebrew text ; whether, supposing it to be genuine, it ought not to be translated a “*RULER*,” since this is a very common acceptation of the term ; and whether the titles contained in this verse were not intended to describe, at least according to their primary signification, the character of Hezekiah, or some other distinguished person, born at the time when the prophecy was uttered. Without endeavoring to settle questions upon which those men who are the best qualified to decide speak with the greatest diffidence, I shall only say that our firm belief in the sole Supreme Divinity of the Father, and the subordination of Jesus Christ, ought not to be shaken by the evidence of a passage which is allowed to be attended with many difficulties, and in which, at the very utmost, the application of the title “*mighty God*” to Jesus of Nazareth would only prove him to be a person unto whom the word of God came. — *Boston Edition*, 185—189.

To the same purport are the remarks of Rev. John Sherman, in his work entitled, "One God in One Person only," one of the earliest treatises in favor of the strict unity of God ever published in America. He says,

"That this passage really respects the Lord Jesus we shall not here undertake to dispute, though there is no certainty in our minds that it has any such reference. Be this as it may, the passage is very far from asserting the supreme and independent divinity of Christ. For,

"1. You will please to notice that he is declared to be *a child born, a son given*. This is the description of his nature. This is what he actually is.

"2. The passage does not say that the government *is now* upon his shoulder, but that it *shall be*; which implies that he is about to be raised to an authority he does not now possess.

"3. You will observe the passage does not say that *he is* the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, &c., but that *he shall be thus styled*; he shall have these titles when the government shall be upon his shoulder.

"4. If you ask how he who *is* a child born and a son given shall rise to the eminence of having the government upon his shoulder, and the high titles mentioned, the passage explains this matter, and says, *The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this*, — that is, will see that these things be conferred upon him.

"In fulfilment of this prediction, if it really respects Christ, the Scriptures inform us that the zeal of the Lord of Hosts has actually performed all that is here declared, — *The God of our Lord Jesus Christ has put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church.\* God hath made that same Jesus whom*

\* Eph. 1 : 22.

*ye have crucified Lord.\* Him hath God exalted with his own right hand to be a Prince,† and given him a name above every name.‡* Pray, is the supreme and independent deity of Christ to be inferred from the statement made in fulfilment of this prediction? If not, as no one will pretend, then why make this inference from the prediction itself?

“It is strange that this passage should be adduced, on every occasion, in proof of the deity of Christ, seeing it only predicts that *the child, the son, should be elevated, by the power of the Lord of Hosts, to the government of his people, and have bestowed upon him high and exalted titles.*”§

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NOTE B. See page 147.

“*The belly of the fish.*”—If Jonah was in reality swallowed by a *fish*, whether by a whale or any other *sea monster*, he might truly consider himself in the bowels of

\* Acts 2 : 36. † Acts 5 : 31. ‡ Phil. 2 : 9.

§ It may not be improper to remark here that the passage is capable of a different translation. *And his name shall be called, a Mighty God, the Father of the everlasting age*; that is, of the Christian dispensation, which is to continue to the end of the world. The noted Lowth translates it as above, excepting that he uses the article *the*, instead of *a*, before mighty God. Further, it ought not to be omitted, that the seventy interpreters, according to the Vatican, have given a very different account of this passage. They make no mention of these titles, but render it thus: *And his name shall be called (megales boules angelos) the messenger of the grand design.* This translation is confirmed by the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion.

*hell*; not, however, according to the most obvious and literal meaning of the Hebrew word *sheol*, but according to a most easy and natural figure. He was cast out into the deep, he was *concealed* in the bowels of the fish, the floods compassed about him, and all the billows and the waves passed over him. This would fully justify the use and application of the word *SHEOL*, *hell*, and differing but very little from a literal sense. The learned have differed very much in opinion as to what kind of fish this must have been. That it could not have been the common whale is evident, as the gullet of the largest of that species does not exceed four inches, — yea, it is stated in the Encyclopædia that “their throat is so narrow that an animal larger than a *herring* could not enter.” This, and other considerations which might be mentioned, have led some to doubt whether it could have been any live animal; but suppose that the same Hebrew word, *dag*, might have also been applied to something else. “*Dagh*, in Persia, signifies a mountain” (or rock). Pinkerton, part XXIX., p. 493. Some have thought that the word might have been applied to the hull or wreck of some vessel which might have been providentially there to receive Jonah, and on which he might have been driven to the shore. Others have supposed (and what, perhaps, is equally probable) that Jonah might have been cast upon a floating mass of *sea-weed*, to which the Hebrew word, without much difficulty, would apply, and which are often very large and extensive. “Sea-plants, finding in the water a sufficient quantity of saline particles, oils, and all such spirits as are requisite for their vegetation, stand in no need of roots in the earth to feed them with proper juices.” *Nat. Delin.*, vol. III., p. 168. See “*Facts Authentic in Science and Religion*,” p. 497.



The Hebrew word *dag*, when used as a verb, signifies *to multiply or increase exceedingly*. Hence, as a noun, it is the general name for *fish*, from their *great increase*. As a noun, *dagen*, which comes from the same *root*, signifies “*corn* of all sorts, so named from its *great increase*, Gen. 27: 28.” See Parkhurst’s Heb. Lex., under the word *dag*. It would not have been, therefore, a very far-fetched figure, to call one of these floating beds of *sea-weed*, which are driven together by the wind, a *great fish*. The text itself seems rather to justify such an idea. See Jonah 2: 5. “The *wheels* were wrapped above my head.” This idea will undoubtedly appear very novel to many, and we do not feel disposed to give any decided opinion on the subject; we only offer these ideas as containing a more rational solution of a difficulty which is in itself calculated to stagger the faith of some honest minds, who may think that a miracle of such an extraordinary nature requires more proof than the testimony of any one man for its support, — and especially the man who was the subject of it, and for whose preservation it was wrought, — before it can be rationally believed. We have no disposition to call in question the existence of miracles, but firmly believe in them; but, at the same time, to undertake to maintain a miracle, where it cannot be maintained beyond all reasonable doubt, so far from strengthening the Christian religion, only serves to weaken it, or, in other words, to give the enemy the advantage. For this reason, therefore, we think that miracles ought never to be contended for whenever the material facts can be accounted for in any other way. But, whatever be supposed to have been the literal facts, one thing is certain, namely, that the hell which Jonah experienced, and out of the belly or bowels of which he prayed unto the

Lord, was certainly in time, and during the period of his natural life.

The history of Jonah, though by some carpel at and turned into ridicule, contains nothing inconsistent with the soundest philosophy and experience ; for,

1. Though a whale, properly so called, has so small a gullet that it could not possibly swallow a man, yet we ought to consider that the word *ketos* does not necessarily mean a whale, as distinguished from other large fishes, but only a great sea-monster, of which there are some — the shark among the rest — very capable of swallowing a man whole, and which have often done so. A very remarkable fish was taken on our own coast, though probably it was not of the full size, and therefore could not contain the body of a man. But others of its species very well might. A print and curious description of it, by Mr. James Ferguson, may be seen, *Philosophical Transactions*, vol. VIII., p. 170, from which even this small one appears to have been near five feet in length, and of great bulk, and to have been merely, as it were, one vast bag, or great hollow tube, capable of containing the body of any animal of size that was in some small degree inferior to its own. And, unquestionably, such a kind of fish, and of still larger dimensions, may, consistently even with the most correct ideas of any natural historian, be supposed to have occasionally appeared in the Mediterranean, as well as on our coast, where such an one was caught, having come up so far as into the British Channel and King's Road.

2. A man may continue in the water, in some instances, without being drowned. Derham tells us (*Phisico-Theology*, 6, 4, cap. 7, note p. 158, 12mo.) that some have the *foramen ovale* of the heart remaining open all their

lives, though in most it is closed very soon after birth ; and that such persons as have the *foramen ovale* so left open could neither be hanged nor drowned ; because, when the lungs cease to play, the blood will nevertheless continue to circulate, just as it does in a fetus in the womb. Though Mr. Cheselden doubted of this fact, yet Mr. Cowper, the anatomist, says he often found the *foramen* open in adults, and gives some curious instances. Mr. Derham mentions several persons who were many hours and days under water, and yet recovered ; and one who even retained the sense of hearing in that state. And Dr. Platt (History of Straffordshire, p. 292) mentions a person who survived and lived after having been hanged at Oxford for the space of twenty-four hours before she was cut down. The fact is notorious, and her pardon, reciting this circumstance, is extant on record. See Ray on the Creation, p. 230, who observes that having the *foramen ovale* of the heart open enables some animals to be amphibious. Where, then, is the absurdity of conceiving that Jonah might have been a person of this kind, having the *foramen ovale* of his heart continuing open from his birth to the end of his days, in which case he could not be drowned, either by being cast into the sea or by being swallowed up by the fish ?

3. Neither could Jonah be injured by the digesting fluid in the fish's stomach ; for Mr. Jo. Hunter observes (Philosophical Transactions, vol. LXII., p. 449) "That no animal substance can be digested, by the digesting fluid usually existing in animal stomachs, while life remains in such animal substances. Animals," says he, "or parts of animals, possessed of the living principle, when taken into the stomach, are not in the least affected by the powers of that viscus so long as the animal principle

remains. Hence it is that we find animals of various kinds living in the stomach, or even hatched or bred there. But the moment that any of these lose the living principle they become subject to the digestive powers of the stomach. If it were possible for a man's hand, for example, to be introduced into the stomach of a living animal, and kept there for some considerable time, it would be found that the dissolvent powers of the stomach could have no effect upon it; but, if the same hand were separated from the body, and introduced into the same stomach, we should then find that the stomach would immediately act upon it. Indeed, if this were not the case, we should find that the stomach itself ought to have been made of indigestible materials; for, if the living principle were not capable of preserving animal substances from undergoing that process, the stomach itself would be digested. But we find, on the contrary, that the stomach, which at one instant — that is, while possessed of the living principle — was capable of resisting the digestive powers which it contained, the next moment — namely, when deprived of the living principle — is itself capable of being digested, either by the digestive powers of other stomachs, or by the remains of that power which it had of digesting other things." Consistently with which observations of Mr. Hunter, we find that smaller fishes have been taken alive out of the stomachs of fishes of prey, and, not having been killed by any bite or otherwise, have survived their being devoured, and have swam away well recovered, and very little affected by the digesting fluid. Two instances of this kind are mentioned by Dr. Platt (*History of Staffordshire*, p. 245), and others might be added.

There appears, therefore, nothing unphilosophical or absurd in supposing that Jonah (having the heart open,

or such a construction of his frame as those persons mentioned by Derham had) might be cast into the sea, and be swallowed up whole by a great fish, and yet be neither drowned, nor bitten, nor corrupted, nor digested, nor killed; and it will easily follow, from the dictates of common sense, that in that case the fish itself must either die or be prompted by its feelings to get rid of its load; and this, perhaps, it might do more readily near the shore than in the midst of the waters; and in that case such person would certainly recover again, by degrees, and escape. I acknowledge there must have been a miraculous divine interposition, in causing all the circumstances of the presence of the fish, of the formation of Jonah, and of the nearness of the shore at the time of his being thrown up, to concur rightly to effect his deliverance; and how much further the miraculous interposition might extend, we cannot nor ought not to presume to ascertain; but solely to show the fact to be philosophically possible, even according to the experience we are permitted to be acquainted with, is sufficient to remove and fully to answer the objections of scoffers. — *Erskine's Sketches of Church History*, vol. II., pp. 299—302.

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NOTE C. See page 148.

*The lowest depths of hell.* — A critical explanation of the original Hebrew word here rendered hell will at once remove from the human mind all that misapprehension which has heretofore been attached to it. The term is often used figuratively, as it is in the passages referred to in the discourse; and whenever it is so used it always represents a state of figurative darkness, — that is, trouble

and affliction, let the cause be what it may. But, whenever it is used in this sense, it is always applied to the miseries of the present state of existence. The original Hebrew word *sheol*, as used in the Old Testament, when applied to the dead, never represents it as being a place of torment, but as being an unknown place of silence, darkness and death. But, as the Greek word *hades*, corresponding to the Hebrew *sheol*, is once used in the New Testament as a place of torment, — namely, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, — it will be necessary to say something further upon the subject.

In the first place, we shall state what we conceive to be the literal application, or rather the literal facts stated in the parable ; and then we shall state what we conceive to be the real meaning, as intended by our Saviour.

It will be necessary, in the first place, to give a more full explanation of the Greek word *hades*, here rendered *hell*, than we have yet given ; because *hades* is here represented as being a place of torment, and it is the only passage in which it is so represented in the Bible, — that is, except when the word is used synonymous with death, and the pains are applied to the living ; as David saith, “The sorrows of death compassed me, and pains of hell gat hold on me.” Psalm 116 : 3. Though it may be said that this implies that there are pains endured in hell, and that David felt these pains by anticipation, yet the pains of which he spake were in the present tense. Let this, however, be as it may, whosoever will examine this subject as he ought will be satisfied that the souls of all, both good and bad, were supposed to be in *hades*, and that this is the first and only intimation in the Bible of there being any separation there between the righteous and the wicked ; for the Old Testament is entirely silent

on the subject. We cannot express our ideas better on this subject than to give them in the words of Dr. Campbell, taken from his *Preliminary Dissertations*, vol. II., part II., page 273, and on.

“As to the word *hades*, which occurs in eleven places in the New Testament, and is rendered *hell* in all except one, where it is translated *grave*, it is quite common in classical authors, and frequently used by the LXX in the translations of the Old Testament. In my judgment it ought never in the Scripture to be rendered *hell*, — at least, in the sense wherein that word is now universally understood by Christians. In the Old Testament the corresponding word is *sheol*, which signifies the state of the dead in general, without regard to the goodness or badness of the persons, their happiness or misery. In translating that word the LXX have almost invariably used *hades*. The state [of the dead] is always represented under those figures which suggest something dreadful, dark and silent, about which the most prying eye and listening ear can acquire no information. The term *hades* is well adapted to express this idea. To this the word *hell*, in its primitive signification, perfectly corresponded; for at first it denoted only what was secret or concealed.

“First, in regard to the situation of *hades*, it seems always to have been conceived, by both Jews and Pagans, as in the lower parts of the earth, near its centre, as we should term it, or its foundation (according to the notions of the Hebrews, who knew nothing of its spherical figure), and answering in depth to the visible heavens in height; both which are, on this account, oftener than once contrasted in sacred writ.”

Dr. Campbell, after reasoning pretty largely on this subject, adds, “So much for the literal sense of the word

*hades*, which, as has been observed, implies properly neither *hell* nor the *grave*, but the place or state of departed souls. I know it has been said, and speciously supported, that in the Mosaical economy there was no express revelation of the existence of souls after death. Admitting this to be in some sense true, the Israelites were not without such intimations of a future state as types and figures and emblematical predictions could give them; yet certain it is that life and immortality were in an eminent manner brought to light by the gospel. But, from whatever source they derived their opinions, that they had opinions on this subject, though dark and confused, is manifest, as from many other circumstances, so particularly from the practice of witchcraft and necromancy, which prevailed among them, and the power they ascribed to sorcerers, — justly or unjustly, it matters not, — of waking the ghosts of the deceased.”

These opinions, it is true, in the first place, might have been all borrowed from the pagan philosophy, and, through the lapse of time, they might approximate nigher and nigher to that hypothesis, until they adopted the idea of separate apartments for the righteous and the wicked in *hades*. Agreeably to these ideas, one part of the scene of the rich man and Lazarus was laid in *hades*, and no doubt perfectly congenial to the popular notions of the day. For “the opinions neither of the Hebrews nor heathens remained invariably the same. And from the time of the captivity, more especially from the time of the subjection of the Jews, first to the Macedonian empire, and afterwards to the Romans, as they had a closer intercourse with the pagans, they insensibly imbibed many of their sentiments, particularly on those subjects whereon their law was silent, and wherein by consequence they



considered themselves at a greater freedom. On this subject of a future state we find a considerable difference in the popular opinions of the Jews, in our Saviour's time, from those which prevailed in the days of the ancient prophets. As both Greeks and Romans had adopted the notion that the ghosts of the departed were susceptible both of enjoyment and suffering, they were led to suppose a sort of retribution in that state, for their merit or demerit in the present. The Jews did not, indeed, adopt the pagan fables on this subject, nor did they express themselves entirely in the same manner; but the general train of thinking in both came pretty much to coincide. The Greek *hades* they found well adapted to express the Hebrew *sheol*. This they came to conceive as including different sorts of habitations, for ghosts of different characters. And though they did not receive the terms *Elysium*, or *Elysian fields*, as suitable appellations for the regions peopled by good spirits, they took, instead of them, as better adapted to their own theology, *the garden of Eden*, or *Paradise*, a name originally Persian, by which the word answering to *garden*, especially when applied to Eden, had commonly been rendered by the LXX. To denote the same state they sometimes used the phrase *Abraham's bosom*, a metaphor borrowed from the manner in which they reclined at meals. But, on the other hand, to express the unhappy situation of the wicked in that intermediate state, they do not seem to have declined the use of the word *tartarus*." See 2 Pet. 2: 4, where the word rendered *hell* is *tartarus*.

These things being premised, it is very obvious that both Abraham and Lazarus, as well as the rich man, were all represented as being in *hades*, the general receptacle for departed spirits, or the dead. They are all repre-

sented as being alive and active, susceptible of happiness or misery ; hence Abraham and Lazarus are represented as being happy, and the rich man as being in torment. They are far distant from each other, and a gulf between. All this accounts for their being in sight and in hearing, which can hardly be reconciled upon any other hypothesis. In the original all the verbs which signify motion in the parable are such as always denote motion on the same ground or level, or nearly so. Thus Lazarus, when dead, is said *to be carried away* by angels, not *carried up* into Abraham's bosom ; and so with the verbs which signify passing from Abraham to the rich man, or from thence to him, the verbs employed are such as always denote motion on the same ground or level ; as passing a river or lake, passing through the Red Sea, or passing from Asia into Macedonia. But, when heaven is spoken of as the termination to which, or from which, the passage is made, the word is invariably different. "Thus both the circumstances of the story and expressions employed in it confirm the explanation I have given. For, if the sacred penmen wrote to be understood, they must have employed their words and phrases in conformity to the current usage of those for whom they wrote."

Thus, this account, if taken literally, and not considered as a parable, would prove a state of condemnation or punishment after *death*, though it would not prove a punishment after the resurrection. But then the truth of the whole account, as a literal fact, depends on the *truth of an intermediate state of consciousness between death and the resurrection* ; which state requires direct proof before it can be consistently believed. Considering the account as a *parable* as it is generally considered by most commentators, admitting the language to be con-

formable to their views of things, it contains all the instruction that it could contain, whether the literal facts be true or not. On this point Dr. Campbell, who was an advocate for the doctrine of an intermediate state, says, "I am not ignorant that the doctrine of an intermediate state between death and the resurrection has been of late strenuously combated by some learned and ingenious men ; amongst whom we must reckon that excellent divine and firm friend to freedom of inquiry, Dr. Law, Bishop of Carlisle. I honor his disposition, and have the greatest respect for his talents ; but, at the same time that I acknowledge he has with much ability supported the side he has espoused, I have never felt myself on this head convinced, though sometimes perplexed, by his reasoning."

Having shown what we conceive to be the literal facts represented in this parable (for a parable we shall consider it, until the literal facts can be proved from other scriptures to be at least probably correct), we shall now briefly state what we conceive to be its figurative application.

1. By the rich man the high priest might be particularly intended, as a representation of the Jews in general.

2. By the beggar the Gentile is represented as excluded from the privileges which God's covenant people enjoyed.

3. By the death of Lazarus and the rich man, and the circumstances which follow, we are to understand the close of the legal dispensation and the opening of the gospel day ; when the Gentile, through faith in the Messiah, died to all his idolatrous religion, and, being absolved from the same, was carried by *angels*, messen-

gers of the covenant, into the faith of the gospel, as preached to Abraham, figuratively represented by *Abraham's bosom*; and, by a firm reliance on the promise made to Abraham, is *comforted*. The rich man died a political death; and the judgments of God denounced in the law and the prophets against the Jews roll on upon him. In this situation he sees fulfilled the words of Christ, Luke 13: 28, 29, which see. He sees the Gentiles flocking to the light, while he remains in the darkness of unbelief, in which he is tormented. The great change of circumstances preys upon his mind like a burning fire.

4. In this situation the dialogue is supposed to take place between this representation of the house of Israel and Abraham. Finding no relief for himself, he solicits for his five brethren in his father's house; by which we may understand that part of the house of Israel which were represented by five virgins, in the twenty-fifth of Matthew. They are those who made void the law by adhering to the traditions of those who taught for doctrine the commandments of men.

The gulf is the barrier between the two dispensations, which cannot be removed until the present dispensation is closed; when out of Sion shall come the deliverer, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and so all Israel shall be saved.

NOTE D. See page 148.

*And it is set on fire of hell.* — It will be necessary for the reader to understand here that the word rendered hell in the New Testament, wherever it is connected with fire, or with damnation, is in the original *gehenna*, which, both in its literal and figurative signification, differs materially

from that of *hades*. It is frequently used by St. Matthew, as also by St. Mark. It is used once by St. Luke. But it is not used by St. John; not in the Acts of the Apostles; not in any of the Epistles, or in any other part of the New Testament, save this once by St. James, who used it figuratively, and his meaning cannot be misunderstood.

This word, as every person of common biblical science knows, signified the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem. It is a compound of two Hebrew words, *ge*, the land or the valley, and *Hinnom*, the name of the owner. It was there the cruel sacrifices of animals, and sometimes children, were made to Moloch, the Ammonitish idol. This place is sometimes called *Tophet*, as some think from *Toph*, a word which signifies a drum, because drums were beat to drown the cries of the suffering children; or, according to others, from a particular fire-stove in the place. In the reign of the good king Josiah, the idolatrous worship into which the Jews had been led was broken up, and Gehenna was defiled and made the receptacle of the filth of Jerusalem. A continual fire was kept burning, to destroy carcasses thrown in; and, in a word, Gehenna became as abominable under the reign of Josiah, as it had been sacred during the idolatrous worship of the Jews. In process of time, as all writers agree, Gehenna came to be a place of punishment where criminals were caused to suffer death by burning; and in this sense the Saviour uses the word, when he says, "But whosoever shall say thou fool shall be in danger of hell fire," that is, the fire of Gehenna.\* With such abhorrence and dread, under

\* On this passage, the learned Parkhurst, a strict believer in endless misery, observes, "*Gehenna of fire* does, I apprehend, in its *outward* and *primary* sense, relate to that dreadful doom of being burnt alive in the valley of Hinnom."

all these circumstances, did the Jews regard this place, that they used it as a figure of dreadful woes and judgments ; and so we find it used both in the Old and New Testament. Thus, in Jer. 19, the destruction of Israel is foretold ; and, in summing up what he had said, the prophet adds, ver. 12, "Thus will I do unto this place, saith the Lord, and to the inhabitants thereof, and *even make this city as Tophet.*" Here Gehenna is certainly used as a figure to represent Jerusalem under its tribulations. We recommend the reader to peruse the whole of Jer. 19. See, also, 7 : 31—34. Jesus used the word in the same sense. Of this we think there cannot be the shadow of a doubt. He said to the Pharisees, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the *damnation of Gehenna?*" Matt. 23 : 33. He immediately adds, "Verily I say unto you, *all these things shall come upon this generation.*" Ver. 36. Whatever Jesus here meant by the "*damnation of Gehenna*" he certainly confined to that generation ; and can there be a question, in the mind of any judicious person, that he referred to the judgment impending over Jerusalem ? He refers to these judgments again in Matt. 24 : 21. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." But here he is particular to say, "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." Ver. 34. From these quotations from the Scriptures, the subject must, we think, be regarded as settled, that Gehenna was used by the prophets and by Jesus Christ as an emblem of the calamities which befell the Jews in the destruction of the city and overthrow of the nation.\* Under this

\* On the word Gehenna are staked the last hopes of those who defend the doctrine of punishment in the future state.

view of the subject, the "hell fire" spoken of in the parable forms a perfect contrast to the "kingdom of God;" — the one was the happy portion of the believer in

Their zeal in contending that this word was used by Christ to favor that doctrine is certainly proportioned to the desperateness of their cause. But can there possibly be any dispute that Jesus meant by the "damnation of Gehenna," in Matt. 23 : 33, the judgment with which God was then about to visit the Jews! "Verily I say unto you," said he, "all these things (this "damnation of Gehenna" being the most important he had mentioned) shall come upon this generation." Ver. 36. And to what did Jesus refer, Matt. 5: 22, by the "fire of Gehenna," except to the fire of the valley of Hinnom, in the literal sense? The learned Parkhurst, an eminent Orthodox critic, as we have already quoted, takes this view of the subject. *Lex. sub voc. Gehen.* Adam Clarke, another believer in endless misery, took the same view. *Com. on New Test. in loco.* We cannot perceive why the "judgment" and the "council," mentioned in the passage, may not be applied to the future state with as much propriety as the "Gehenna of fire."

Now, in reference to the ten other passages in which Gehenna occurs, they should be explained by the help of these. In the Old Testament the valley of Hinnom is made a figure of the temporal punishment of the Jews. This is unquestionable. When Jesus spoke of Gehenna to his disciples, would they not understand him as using it in the same sense? When he threatened the unbelieving Jews with the "damnation of Gehenna," would not they understand him to use the word in the sense in which their own prophets had used it? Jesus never intimated, nor is there a single intimation thrown out by any New Testament writer, that this word is to have a widely different signification in the New Testament from what it bore in the Old. To us it seems highly probable that when Jesus threatened the Jews with the "damnation of

Jesus ; the other was the sad lot of those who were regardless of his teachings and admonitions.

Gehenna," he had in his mind the declaration of Jeremiah that God would make Jerusalem like Tophet.

To this it may be replied, that, notwithstanding Gehenna never bears the sense of *future punishment* in the Old Testament, yet in the time of Christ it did have that signification, as used in common language among the Jews, and by their theological writers ; and therefore, it is asked, would not the Jews have so understood Christ in his use of the word ? We answer no, even if this had been the case ; for did he not say, concerning the "damnation of Gehenna," "all these things shall come on this generation" ? Whatever, therefore, *their* views of Gehenna were, they could not have misunderstood him in *his* view of it. But it is far from being a settled question, that the Jews in the time of Christ did understand by Gehenna a place of punishment in the invisible world. That the Pharisees believed in punishments after death we do not deny ; but Jesus explicitly admonished his disciples "to take heed and beware of the leaven (that is, *doctrine*) of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Compare Matt. 16 : 6 with 12. If Jesus regarded the doctrine of future punishment, in which the Pharisees believed, as of any importance, why did he not make an exception of that sentiment, when he gave the above admonition ? But that the Jews in the time of Christ used the word Gehenna to apply to future punishment, has never been proved. That word, as Mr. Balfour has shown (Inquiry, 2d edition, pp. 239, 240), does not occur in the Apocrypha. The Targums have not been sufficiently examined by any author who doubted the common opinion. "Before we ought to be satisfied with regard to their bearing on this subject," says a careful writer, "it appears to me that the following points should be clearly ascertained : 1. Whether the *oldest* of them, those of Jonathan, Ben Uzziel



## NOTE E. See page 202.

In addition to the doctrines of men, mentioned in the sermon, which it is impossible either to know or understand, we would mention in this place that of a *trinity in unity* with respect to the Deity ; or, in other words, the doctrine of the trinity. It is impossible that such a doctrine should be known to be true, since there is nothing in divine revelation to support it ; and it is not even pretended by any one that such a doctrine can be understood. Why, then, must it be believed ? The doctrine cannot be expressed in Scripture language. The words Trinity, Triune God, Three Persons in One God, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, Holy and Blessed Trinity, Glorious Trinity, Blessed and Adorable Trinity, and the like, are not in that connection ; neither is the word Trinity in the Bible ; neither is the doctrine made up or supported by Bible language. Yea, we hazard nothing in asserting that it is impossible for any man to express either of the above ideas in the language of Scripture. And yet this is considered the most essential article of the *Orthodox* creed !

and Onkelos, do in fact use the word Gehenna to denote a place of future torment ; for all the others are of too late a date to be used as evidence. 2. Whether it is probable that even *those* Targums are as old as our Saviour's time ; for I understand that this is a disputed question among critics, and that the celebrated Bauer and Jahn bring them down to the second or third century."

On the whole, there is no evidence yet ascertained that the Jews ever used Gehenna in reference to *future punishment*, as early as the time of Christ.

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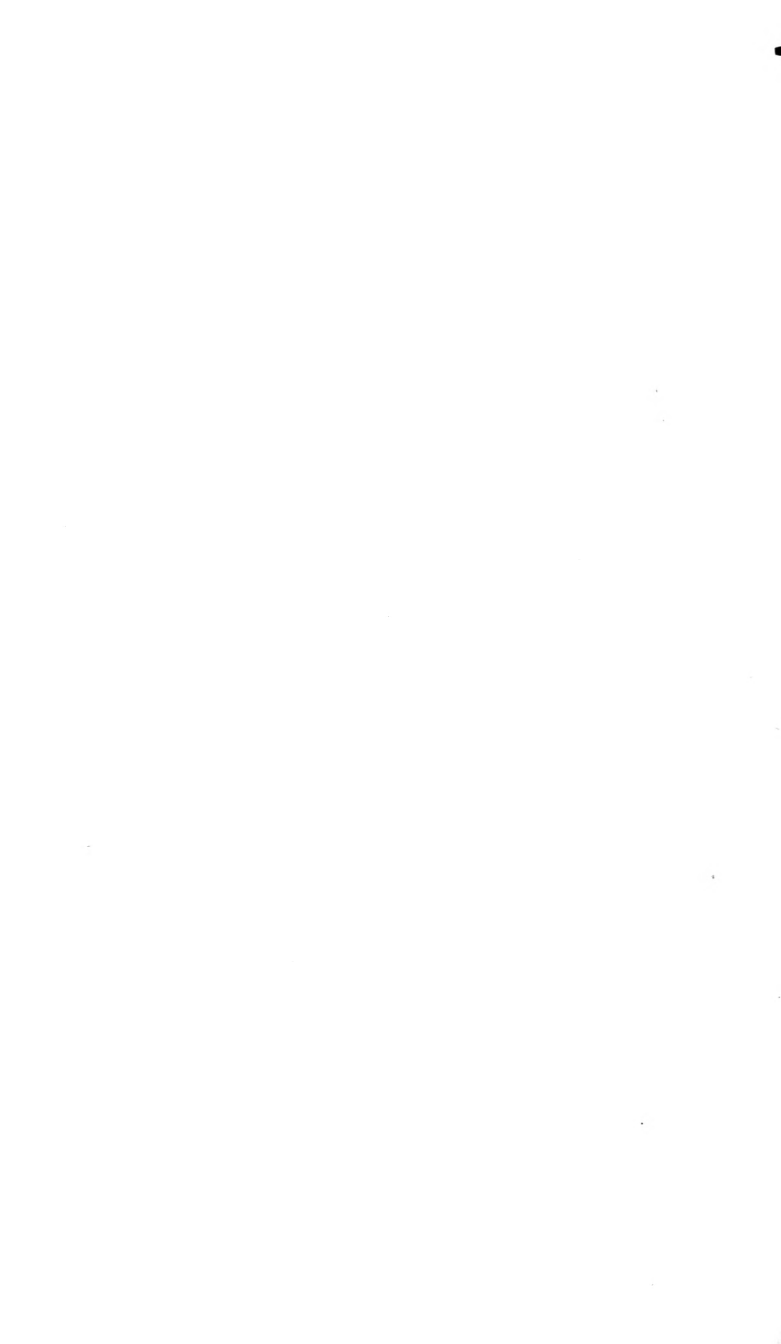
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